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No. 215.

THE EMPTY FRAME.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

An olden frame upon the wall
Hung many years with my room,
On it the sunlight's gold would fall,
And round it gather midnight's gloom.
But from that frame there came a smile,
Or features fair, whose eyes would aim
Their witching glance at me the while,
For it was but an empty frame.
One even calm I laid me down
To seek repose with sealed eyes:
The day put on its twilight frown,
And stars shone from the arching sky—
Soon slumber claimed me all his own,
Then came a dream too fair to name,
I'll tell it, if it must be known:
That dream was of the empty frame.
In dreaming I looked up, it seemed,
And, circled in that frame of gold,
A sweet, fair face with radiance beamed
Where once a void had dwelt of old.
Her eyes looked kindly down on me,
And from her lips a smile then came;
Although unknown, I love to see
It peer in dreams from out the frame.

Kentuck, the Sport: OR, DICK TALBOT AT THE MINES. A TALE OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "GENTLEMAN GEORGE," "WOLF DEMON,"
"ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOY," "THE MAN FROM TEXAS,"
"OVERLAND KIT," "RED MAZEPPA," "AGE OF
SPEARS," "HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES
OF NEW YORK," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SITUATION.

CONGLETON'S heavy under jaw dropped as he listened to Talbot's words, and a look of sullen anger came over his face. Too late he saw how the calm and quiet superintendent had led him on to explain his rascally scheme without meaning to assist him in the least; and as he reflected how skillfully he—the "Frisco sharp"—had been induced to make a fool of himself, by the able wit of the mere mining "boss," there came up in his heart such a feeling of rage that he could have gladly killed Talbot on the spot. It was only by a great effort that he restrained himself from an open display of his intense disgust.

And Talbot, coolly watching the features of the "special agent," who had been intrusted with the control of a great mining company; and who had so calmly and deliberately plotted to rob the men who trusted him, and seize up on their golden chance for himself, really enjoyed the discomfort so plainly apparent in Congleton's face; while Brown, whose sense of honor was decidedly keen, only refrained from indulging in one of his horse-laughs, by turning it into a violent fit of coughing.

"Yes, sir; you can go back to Frisco, Mr. Special Agent, and tell the good folks there that the Cinnabar lode is as good a one as was ever struck in Northern California."

"Ah, yes, of course," muttered Congleton, in confusion.

Tell them to hold on to their stock, and not to part with it for less than a hundred and fifty. If the ore increases in richness, as I think it will in the next fifty feet, it will pan out as rich as any one of Grass-Valley strikes."

"Yes; it's lucky that things look so well," the spectator observed, absently.

"You see, I was quite correct when I told you that I could change your opinion in regard to the value of the Cinnabar stock."

"Yes, I see," Congleton was rather at a loss for words.

"Now of course you can return and cheer up the hearts of the Cinnabar stockholders; you have pretty good proof of what the lode is really worth. There is nothing like a man seeing things with his own eyes."

"Ah, yes," and then a brilliant idea came to the spectator; he saw a way to get out of the awkward position into which his uncautious words had placed him. His face brightened up, and a look of profound wisdom came over his hard features.

"Of course, Mr. Talbot, you understood the drift of my remarks a few minutes ago?"

"Yes, I believe I comprehended your meaning," the superintendent replied dryly.

"You and Mr. Brown are of course strangers to me, and, as special agent of the company, deputized with full power to act as the company itself, it was only natural that I should want to understand the style of the men running the machine."

"Well, I hope, Mr. Congleton, that you are pretty well acquainted with my style, although you haven't seen much of me," Talbot remarked, his face calm, but a latent touch of devilry apparent in his tone.

"Oh, yes, I'm quite satisfied!" the spectator spoke, hastily. "I see that you are not a man to be influenced by any enemies of the Cinnabar Company. In fact, I am fully satisfied that you are not to be bought. I appreciate that you, as a man of business, will treat the little trade that I laid just now to draw you out."

"Oh, certainly," returned Talbot, with easy politeness, "it was very cleverly done, too, Mr. Congleton; the smartest man in the world would have believed that you were fully in earnest, and that you intended to sell out the interest of the men who selected you to look after the affairs of the mine."

"That so!" exclaimed Brown, and then he gave utterance to a horse laugh which grated harshly on the ears of the special agent; but Congleton concealed his annoyance with a forced laugh.

"Well, gentlemen, I reckon we understand each other now," with a very well-assumed appearance of hearty satisfaction and frank openness.

"Yes, I think you are quite right about that, Mr. Congleton," Talbot observed, not the shadow of a smile upon his face. "For my



"Luck to the Cinnabar Quartz Mining Company—that's you and me, rocks!"

part I am quite sure that we understand each other."

Brown gave just a single look at Talbot's features, and then turned away to conceal a smile. He understood the delicate insinuation. Congleton did not appear to notice the doubtful assurance, and affected to appear quite satisfied.

"There is nothing like having the working folks of a thing of this sort all O. K.," added the spectator. "If the parties that find the funds and the men that disburse them are all working together, the machine runs smooth."

"Well, Mr. Congleton, as far as the foreman and superintendent of the Cinnabar mine are concerned, you can tell the directors of the company that it will take more money than any sane man would care to offer to buy them to smash the concern which they are paid to manage. The books of the company are right here in the office, ready for your examination, at any minute. They will show where every dollar has gone to, and I really reckon that there hasn't been much dust wasted. In fact, the footings of the books, counting the supplies on hand at their cash value, will show that there has been more money expended than I have received from the company, and from the product of the stamps."

"How can that be?" asked Congleton, in astonishment.

"The company's money ran out just as the canal broke, and the money that I realized from the sales of ore on hand, crushed but not washed, was only sufficient to pay the hands for a single week. We have been shut down just four weeks now to-day, and the second week Brown and myself advanced the money to the company out of our own private resources, to settle. I sent a full statement of just how things stood to San Francisco, and stated that unless we received money enough to square the labor bills up, that we should be compelled to stop just where we were. The president wrote that I must keep things running, and that he would send a special agent with money. That was three weeks ago. The only way we could keep the men on was to pay them or give them good assurance that they would be paid. As I have said, Brown and myself squared the bills the first week; that took five hundred dollars cash from us, which brought us down to the bed-rock."

"Cleaned you out, eh?"

"Yes; the labor bills amount to six hundred per week; but the store run a hundred, and eased us out that much."

"Then there's two weeks' pay due the hands?"

"Yes; two weeks Saturday last, and this Monday."

"And you have no money?"

"Yes we have; there's two hundred and ten dollars in the treasury of the Cinnabar Company at this present moment."

"Where did you get it from?" asked Congleton, in astonishment.

"From the store—sales of goods during the past two weeks," Talbot replied. "I laid in the goods to supply our own hands; but when the money I quietly got word around town that the Cinnabar Company would sell their stock at cost prices, so we built up quite a little business. We have the store open every night now."

For the first time Congleton began to realize what a job he had taken in hand, when he had made up his mind to "throw" the superintendent of the Cinnabar mine. But the prize was such a golden one that it was worthy a desperate struggle.

"Then you have two hundred dollars, about, to pay twelve hundred with?"

"That's correct."

"I suppose that if you couldn't pay, the hands would wait willingly enough?" Congleton suggested.

"Some would and others wouldn't," Talbot

replied; "but the moment it gets round that there's a special agent of the company here, I doubt if there's a man of them would do a stroke of work without his money."

"That's bad, for I've brought no funds with me," Congleton said, abruptly.

Talbot's brows knitted, and Brown looked astonished.

"But I can doubtless get funds from San Francisco in a week or so, upon the receipt there of a favorable report."

"I'm afraid that we will have trouble then," Talbot remarked with a grave look upon his face.

"Oh, I reckon not," Congleton said, carelessly. "Well, gents, I'm much obliged. I'll jes' take a look round the town. I'll see you again to-night."

As the door closed after the spectator, Brown caught Talbot's eye.

"What do you think, old man?" the foreman asked.

"He's an ugly customer, and we're going to have trouble."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GAMBLER'S "LUCK."

CONGLETON strolled carelessly down the street toward the center of the mining camp. His face wore a very sober look and his brows were wrinkled with lines that told of deep reflection.

"I reckon that this hyer thing ain't as easy as rolling off a log," he muttered to himself, in deep abstraction, as he walked along. "This cuss will show fight, sure. It will take considerable work to boost him out of the Cinnabar Company; but it will be did. I reckon Hosa Congleton, Esq., don't generally turn back when he puts his hand to the plow. Durn the fellow! I'll be ready for him the next time it comes to fight-talk. It ain't often that H. Congleton, the Frisco shark, takes water—not often does he crawfish, and I reckon he won't ag'in. Now I'll see what stuff this broadcloth sport is made of. He was right; it's a big stake!"

And as the spectator walked along he reflected upon the details of the interview which he had just had with the superintendent of the Cinnabar Company, and the more he thought of the matter the greater grew the rage in his heart against the man he could neither buy nor use.

"I would have rather gone cohorts with him than with this outside party," he muttered. "The confounded idiot! I never saw a man so blind to his own interest before. I would have fixed the matters with Talbot, but since it ain't to be, why he'll jes' have to git out. That ain't many men in this world kin cross the path of Hosa Congleton, Esq., and live to boast of it. When I stretch out my hand, it's like old death a-feelin' for 'em."

And just as the unscrupulous spectator uttered the vault, and stretched his long, hairy fingers out as if in illustration of his words, he happened to raise his eyes and saw the sign of the Last Chance Saloon.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, coming to an abrupt halt; "there's the place now. Last Chance, eh? Well, now, that fits in correct. Talbot was my first and this fellow is my last chance to make a big strike out of the Cinnabar mine."

Smiling at the conceit, the spectator entered the saloon. Foxy, the bar-keeper, alone was visible. He ducked his head in salutation as Congleton entered. The bar-keeper saw at once that the spectator was a stranger.

"Isn't this Mr. Hardin's place?" Congleton asked.

"Tis, sur," answered Foxy, promptly.

"Is he in?"

"Yis, sur."

"I'd like to see him on a little business; say Mr. Congleton wishes to see him."

Foxy departed and in a moment returned with Kentuck in person, from the inner room.

"I didn't expect you so soon," Kentuck said; "come into my private room. Foxy, if any one wishes to see me, except Yankee Jim, tell 'em that I'm out and won't be home till dark. If Jim comes, tell me."

Hardin then conducted the spectator through the gambling saloon into his little room at the back of the house.

Congleton was considerably astonished at the manner in which the private apartment of the gambler was furnished. The Last Chance building was nothing but a big wooden shanty, constructed in the cheapest and easiest manner; the bar-room and the saloon dedicated to King Faro, were only two bare apartments, the walls and ceilings whitewashed, and the floors covered with sawdust loosely sprinkled over the rough boards; but the little room, Kentuck's snuggery, was neat and pretty as a lady's boudoir. The rough ceiling was hid by blue cotton cloth tacked to the rafters with little brass-headed nails. The walls were hung with similar stuff. The floor was covered with a tasty, small-figured blue and yellow carpet. The furniture comprised a bed—the bedding made up neat as wax, and covered with a snowy quilt—a bureau, a small table, a rocking-chair, and two common ones. But strangest of all, from the ceiling, pendent from a gilt hook, swung a bird-cage with a bright little canary perched within.

The room was lighted by a single window only, and that was high up in the wall and looked into the gaming saloon.

Kentuck noticed the look of amazement upon Congleton's face as he glanced around the apartment.

"Didn't expect to see a shebang fixed up like this, in these yere diggings, I reckon?" the sport remarked.

"No, I confess I didn't. You appear to be pretty comfortably situated here."

"Yes; it cost a heap of money to get these things up from Yreka though, but we can't live but once an' I wasn't raised in a wilderness."

"But the bird," said Congleton, pointing to the canary.

"That beats your game, eh?"

"Yes, rather; you don't appear to be the kind of man to take to a thing of that kind."

"You're right, thar!" exclaimed Kentuck, abruptly. "I won that bird in my place in Yreka; kinder curious, too. There was a soft headed fellow, all worn out with the fever, came into my place one night, and bucked the bank until he was busted; then he went out and come back with that bird. He said it was a pet of his wife who had come with him up to the mines and died thar, and for her sake he had held onto the bird. Well, to make a long story short, he wanted to stake the critter. Seem' the cuss had run his pile out at my table, I couldn't very well go back on him, and as I wanted to do the squar thing, I jes' allowed him five dollars' worth of chips. He slung 'em all down on the queen and lost like the durned fool that he was. He jes' gave one look when the queen came up on the wrong side, and then gave a yell and rushed out. I never seen him arter that time. I didn't want the bird any way and I thought mebbe that the cuss would come back after it, so I jes' put it away. And now, sport, comes the hull strength of the story. Afore I got the bird, things were rough with me, but from that night they changed right round, an' the 'bank' made money, hand over fist, 'cept when the bird happened to be sick. If that little yaller galoot stays up on his perch all day long, with his head down in between his shoulders, jes' like a man with the fever, an' won't eat nothin', then I dize for my pile, because it's a sure sign that luck will run bad that night; but if he's lively an' hoppin' round his cage during the day, then the bank will run O. K. at night."

"That's a strange superstition," the spectator remarked, in astonishment. He was not familiar with the peculiar ideas in regard to luck so common to men who risk their fortune upon

the turning of a card and depend entirely upon the green cloth and the painted pictures for their daily bread.

"Well, it may be a superstition," the sport said, reflectively, "but, rocks, it would take a pile of money to buy that bird from me. Now, I jes' tell you one little instance. When I started this place, the first two nights I was open the bird was on the road and didn't get through. Those two nights the 'bank' lost 'bout two thousand dollars; pretty heavy loss considerin' that bets were limited to a hundred, and the very night that the bird got in the bank was losin' again, but the moment the little feller spread himself and h'isted his wings around, luck turned and the 'bank' won."

The grave face of Kentuck and his earnest manner were ample proof that he fully believed in his theory.

"Suppose the bird should die?" Congleton asked.

"Sport, the Last Chance would see nary card flipped up out of the box for a week at least. I'd give the streak of luck time to turn."

"You seem to have a pretty good thing of it here," the spectator observed.

"Yes, as far as the money is concerned, I'm doing well enough; but it's an awful life," Kentuck said, soberly. "There ain't hardly a man risks his money in my place that don't really hunger for my life if the wrong card comes up and I rake in his dust. A man who runs a gambling shop in this yere country does it with his life in his hand. You see, I don't have any windows looking to the outside, except in the front of the building. Why, after I've closed up the concern at night, I've heard the scamps prowling up and down outside, jes' mad to let daylight through my carcass. They've fired into the room two or three times, but the wall is double and the space between filled in with dirt—a regular breastwork."

"I should think that they would go for you in the daytime," Congleton suggested.

"That has happened five or six times, but Jack has allers been as good as his master," replied the sport, coolly. "If it comes to drawin' shootin'-irons, you can bet your bottom dollar no man gets the 'drop' on me. I reckon to have first fire every time."

"Well, to come to business," said Congleton, abruptly, "I am ready to go in with you, but it will be no easy job to get Talbot out."

"I'll do it!" cried Kentuck; "I'll do it, if it takes the heart right out of me!"

CHAPTER XIX.

IN COUNCIL.

CONGLETON made a grimace at Kentuck's vaunting speech.

"Don't you believe that I kin run Talbot out?" the sport questioned, noticing the look upon the face of the spectator.

"It won't be easy," Congleton observed, doubtfully.

"Big strikes ain't to be got easy in this world," Kentuck replied, sagely, "but, as sure as I sit here, I'll run him out."

"But the way?"

"That's what I'm coming to; take it easy, rocks; when I start in to break a bank, I allers calculate the chances before I puts down my 'checks.' Now, don't run away with the idea that, because I said in my emphatic way I was going to win the trick, that I'm going to rush in like a mad bull, careless whether thar's a corral of bushes or a solid rock wall afore me; nary time. I said that I would run Talbot out of the Cinnabar mine if it took the heart right out of me. Now that's my game and I'm going to play a winning hand, so I must 'stock' the pack and ring in a 'cold' deal on the Superintendent of the Cinnabar Company."

"You have some plan in view then?" said Congleton, just a little surprised.

"Correct, old man!" exclaimed Kentuck, emphatically. "I have just got the little deal arranged that will win my game, I reckon."

"Go ahead and explain."

"In the first place let us understand each other," Kentuck observed, in his usual impassive way. "Sit down," and the sport pulled two chairs up to the little table, then produced a small flask and a couple of wine-glasses from one of the bureau drawers.

Congleton sat down, Kentuck filled the wine-glasses from the flask, pushed one toward the spectator, and sat down on the unoccupied chair, and took the other glass in his hand.

"Take a little brandy; it's a prime article, twenty years old; no poison about it; it's some that I keep for my own private use; it will clear your head. I'll give you a toast, too: Luck to the Cinnabar Quartz Mining Company—that's you and me, rocks."

Kentuck took a sip of the brandy and laughed at his own witty remark.

"Now, first and foremost, do you accept the proposition that I made to you in your office in Frisco?"

"That is to fix things so as to get possession of this mine hyer?"

"Correct!"

"It's a bargain."

"Shake," said Kentuck, laconically.

As the thin, white fingers of the gambler closed over the horny palm of the brawny spectator, Kentuck looked Congleton straight in the eye.

"Now, the fair thing is," Kentuck said, slowly, still retaining Congleton's hand within his own, "we share and share alike after the job is done, but if you put in ten thousand dollars to my five, or I two thousand to your one, as the case may be, the extra amount is to be paid over to the man who advanced it out of the profits of the mine before any division is made."

"That's perfectly fair," Congleton remarked; "do you want any papers drawn up?"

"Nary paper," replied the sport, laconically. "I reckon we understand each other. If I was going to try to beat you, rocks, all the papers in California wouldn't stop me."

"But the legal papers might stop me, you know, if I took it into my head to go back on

our agreement," Congleton suggested, a twinkle in his shrewd eyes.

"I reckon, pardner, that if you were to beat me out of my share in this here transaction, your heirs would stand a heap sight better chance than you of enjoying the spiles," Kentuck's meaning was quite plain.

"I guess we understand each other," the speculator observed, with an appearance of great frankness.

"I reckon so."

Then Kentuck released Congleton's hand and took another sip of the brandy.

"I s'pose you understand the way affairs are fixed?"

"Oh, yes; I had a long talk with Talbot and Brown."

"They think that the mine is big?"

"Yes, no chance of buying them out. They are going to start the stamps again to-morrow."

"I'll bet two to one they don't, if I say the word!" Kentuck exclaimed.

"Aha! you've got things in working order so soon?"

"I reckon so; in the first place, how much money has Talbot got in the treasury?"

"About two hundred dollars."

"And he owes the hands nigh on to twelve hundred."

"But they will be apt to wait for their money if he distributes the two hundred among them, and then, too, if he is hard pushed, he has a lot of goods in store that he might be able to raise money on. And if he gets the stamps to work, he'll be able to get an advance from the express company, possibly."

"Well, we must block all these moves," Kentuck announced.

"That's one man that runs the hands, and I run that one man. If I say strike, strike it is! Not only that, but I'll fix it so that they will neither work themselves nor let anybody else work. As to raising money on the goods, I reckon it can't be done. That ain't many hundred dollars laying round loose in this here town."

"But if he gets the stamps in working order—"

"But nary stamp will he work!" interrupted Kentuck, decidedly.

"I reckon the strikers won't let things run until they get their money."

"Talbot may show fight."

"So much the better," Kentuck replied.

"He isn't the only man that carries a shooter's iron in this here city. If that is a scrimmage, it's ten to one that somebody wings him, and that would save a heap of trouble."

"I've got an idea!" exclaimed Congleton, suddenly.

"An idea that may work well. I have full authority from the directors of the company at San Francisco: suppose I remove both Talbot and Brown from their offices upon the plea that they have squandered the money of the company and that their mismanagement has ruined the mine."

"Pretty good, pard, but I reckon that they wouldn't go. They would be mighty apt to stick, and to tell both you and the directors to go to blazes."

"Then we've got 'em!" cried the speculator, exultingly.

"We call upon the law to step in and enforce our rights."

"Yes, but we haven't got any law here yet," Kentuck remarked.

"Next week we're going to elect a mayor, though, and form a regular city government."

"Then we'll be all right."

"S'pose the mayor won't act in our interest?" suggested Kentuck.

"We must take care to elect a man that will. Who are the candidates?"

"Only two up, Billy MacArdle, an old Scotchman, president of the Dundee Company; they run the Blue Bonnet and the Dundee lodes. Did you notice a small concern just outside the city as you came up from Yreka?"

"Congleton nodded."

"Old Red Billy, they call him; he's a close-fisted old cuss, but poplar with the best men of the town."

"Could we use him?" Congleton asked, significantly.

"Nary use," responded Kentuck, laconically.

"He's a cross-grained old galoot, contrary as a mule. If he had his way, he'd shut up all such places as mine, durn him!"

"I shouldn't think such a man would be acceptable to the inhabitants of this delightful region, judging from what I have seen of it," Congleton remarked.

"Well, I tell you what it is, rocks: Cinnabar is a good deal like the rest of the mining camps, looks worse than it is. That's a heap of men round this here town that don't trouble whisky much and never lay out a dollar on keards."

"But the other candidate?"

"Jimmy Hughes; he keeps the Dry-Up Hotel; that's the white-washed building over the way. Jimmy is very poplar with the boys; keeps the best liquor in town—no better judge of whisky this side of Frisco."

"I should think that his chances would be good now."

"Well, I don't know," Kentuck observed.

"Talbot and Brown and nearly all the big men are backing Mac; they've got the rocks and the influence."

"Do you think that Hughes would be accessible to reason if he was elected?" Congleton asked, with a suggestive wink.

"I reckon a hundred dollars would plug Jimmy's eyes up so tight that he'd be willing to swat black was white and white no color at all."

"He's the man for our money," Congleton exclaimed, decidedly.

"We must elect him, Hardin, if we don't succeed in getting Talbot out before the election comes on. I've had some little experience in the election line east. I reckon we kin fix things. What are the regulations in regard to voters?"

"Any man that's been in the city ten days."

"And the inspectors who receive the vote?"

"Two for each side; the city is divided into two wards, upper and lower."

"Splendid chance for our men to vote twice," protested Congleton, briskly, rubbing his hands.

"We'll give 'em a lively shake, anyway," Kentuck replied.

"Foxey sticking his head into the room interrupted the conversation."

"Here's Yankee Jim; d'ye want him?" the bar-keeper asked.

"Yes, start him in!"

"The bar-keeper's head disappeared."

"He's the man that runs the hands on the Cinnabar work."

(To be continued—continued in No. 211.)

The Headless Horseman.

A STRANGE STORY OF TEXAS.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

CHAPTER XLV.

A TRAIL GONE BLIND.

Was it a phantom? Surely it could not be human?

So questioned El Coyote and his terrified companions. So, too, had the scared Gallegian interrogated himself, until his mind, clouded by repeated appeals to the demijohn, became temporarily relieved of the terror

In a similar strain had run the thoughts of more than a hundred others, to whom the headless horseman had shown himself—the party of searchers who accompanied the major.

It was at an earlier hour, and a point in the prairie five miles further east, that to the weird figure had made itself manifest.

Looking westward, with the sun-glare in their eyes, they had seen only its shape, and nothing more—at least nothing to connect it with Maurice, the mustanger.

Viewing it from the west, with the sun at his back, the Gallegian had seen enough to make out a resemblance to his master—if not an absolute identification.

Under the light of the moon the four Mexicans, who knew Maurice Gerald by sight, had arrived at a similar conclusion.

If the impression made upon the servant was one of the wildest awe, equally had it stricken the conspirators.

The searchers, though less frightened by the strange phenomenon, were none the less puzzled to explain it.

Up to the instant of its disappearance no explanation had been attempted—save that focally conveyed in the bizarre speech of the borderer.

"What do you make of it, gentlemen?" said the major, addressing those that had clustered around him. "I confess it mystifies me."

"An Indian trick," suggested one. "Some decoy to draw us into an ambushade?"

"A most unlikely lure, then," remarked another. "Surely the last that would attract me."

"I don't think it's Indian," said the major; "I don't know what to think. What's your opinion of it, Spangler?"

The tracker shook his head, as if equally uncertain.

"Do you think it's an Indian in disguise?" urged the officer, pressing him for an answer.

"I know no more than yourself, major," replied he. "It should be something of that kind; for what else can it be? It must either be a man or a dummy!"

"That's it—a dummy!" cried several, evidently relieved by the hypothesis.

"Whatsomever it is—man, dummy or devil," said the frontiersman who had already pronounced upon it, "that's no reason why we should be frightened from followin' its trail. Has he left any, I wonder?"

"If it has," replied Spangler, "we'll soon see. Ours goes the same way—so far as can be judged from here. Shall we move forrard, major?"

"By all means. We must not be turned from our purpose by a trifle like that. Forward!"

The horsemen again advanced—some of them not without a show of reluctance. There were among them men, who, if left to themselves, would have taken the back track.

Of this number was Calhoun, who, at the first moment of sighting the strange apparition, had shown signs of affright even beyond the rest of his companions. His eyes had suddenly assumed an unnatural glassiness; his lips were white as ashes; while his drooping jaw laid bare two rows of teeth, which he appeared with difficulty to restrain from chattering!

But for the universal confusion, his wild manner might have been observed. So long as the singular form was in sight, there were eyes only for it; and when it had at length disappeared, the party advanced along the trail, the ex-captain hung back, riding unobserved among the rearmost.

The tracker had guessed aright. The spot upon which the ghostly shape had for the moment stood still, lay direct upon the trail they were already taking up.

But, as if to prove the apparition a spirit, on reaching the place there were no tracks to be seen!

The explanation, however, was altogether natural. Where the horse had wheeled round, and for miles beyond the plain was thickly strewn with white shingle. It was, in trapper parlance, a "chalk prairie." The stones showed displacement; and here and there an abrasion that appeared to have been made by the hoof of a horse. But these marks were scarce discernible, and only to the eyes of the skilled tracker.

It was the case with the trail they had been taking up—that of the shod mustang; and as the surface had lately been disturbed by a wild herd, the particular hoof-marks could no longer be distinguished.

They might have gone further in the direction taken by the headless rider. The sun would have been their guide, and after that the evening star. But it was the rider of the shod mustang they were desirous to overtake; and the half-hour of daylight that followed was spent in fruitless search for his trail—gone blind among the shingle.

Spangler proclaimed himself at fault, as the sun disappeared over the horizon.

They had no other alternative but to ride back to the chaparral, and bivouac among the bushes.

The intention was to make a fresh trial for the recovery of the trail, at the earliest hour of the morning.

It was not fulfilled, at least as regarded time. The trial was postponed by an unexpected circumstance.

Scarcely had they found camp, when a courier arrived, bringing a dispatch from the major.

It was from the commanding officer of the district, whose headquarters were at San Antonio de Bexar. It had been sent to Fort Inge, and thence forwarded.

The major made known its tenor by ordering "boots and saddles" to be sounded; and before the sweat had become dry upon the horses the dragoons were once more upon their backs.

The dispatch had conveyed the intelligence that the Comanches were committing outrage, not upon the Leona, but fifty miles further to the eastward, close to the town of San Antonio itself.

It was no longer a mere rumor. The maraud had commenced by the murder of men, women, and children, with firing of their horses.

The major was commanded to lose no time, but bring what troops he could spare to the scene of operations. Hence his hurried departure.

The civilians might have stayed; but friendship—even parental affection—must yield to the necessities of nature. Most of them had set forth with further preparation than the saddling of their horses, and shivering under their guns; and hunger called them home.

There was no intention to abandon the search. That was to be resumed as soon as they could change horses, and establish a better system of commissariat. Then would it be continued—as one and all declared, to the "bitter end."

A small party was left with Spangler to take up the trail of the American horse, which, according to the tracker's forecast, would lead back to the Leona. The rest returned along with the dragoons.

Before parting with Pointdexter and his friends, the major made known to them—that he had hitherto kept back—the facts relating to the bloody sign, and the tracker's interpretation of it. As he was no longer to take part in the search, he thought it better to communicate to those who should a circumstance so important.

It pained him to direct suspicion upon the young Irishman; with whom in the way of his calling he had held some pleasant intercourse. But duty was paramount; and, notwithstanding his disbelief in the mustanger's guilt, or rather his belief in its improbability, he could not help acknowledging that appearances were against him.

With the planter and his party it was no longer a suspicion. Now that the question of Indians was disposed of, men boldly proclaimed Maurice Gerald a murderer.

That the deed had been done no one thought of doubting. Oberdoffer's story had furnished the first chapter of the evidence. Henry's horse returning with the blood-stained saddle the last. The intermediate links were readily supplied—partly by the interpretations of the tracker, and partly by conjecture.

No one paused to investigate the motive—at least with any degree of closeness. The hostility of Gerald was accounted for by his quarrel with Calhoun; on the supposition that it might have extended to the whole family of the Pointdexters!

It was very absurd reasoning; but men upon the track of a supposed murderer rarely reason at all. They think only of destroying him.

With this thought did they separate; intending to start afresh on the following morning, throw themselves once more upon the trail of two men who were missing, and follow it up, till one or both should be found—one or both, living or dead.

The party left with Spangler remained upon the spot which the major had chosen as a camp-ground.

They were in all less than a dozen. A larger number was deemed unnecessary. Comanches, in that quarter, were no longer to be looked for; nor was there any other danger than that called for a strength of men. Two or three would have been sufficient for the duty required of them.

Nine or ten stayed—some out of curiosity, others for the sake of companionship. They were chiefly young men—sons of planters and the like. Calhoun was among them—the acknowledged chief of the party; though Spangler, acting as guide, was tacitly understood to be the man to whom obedience should be given.

Instead of going to sleep, after the others had ridden away, they gathered around a roaring fire, already kindled within the thicket glade.

Among them was no stint for supper—either of eatables or drinkables. The many who had gone back—knowing they would not need them—had surrendered their haversacks, and the "heel-taps" of their canteens, to the few who remained. There was liquor enough to last through the night—even if spent in continuous carousal.

Despite their knowledge of this—despite the cheerful crackling of logs, as they took their seats around the fire—they were not in high spirits.

One and all appeared to be under some influence, that like a spell, prevented them from enjoying a pleasure perhaps not surpassed upon earth.

You may talk of the tranquil joys of the domestic hearth. At times, upon the prairie, I have myself thought of, and longed to return to them. But now, looking back upon both, and calmly comparing them, one with the other, I cannot help exclaiming:

"Give me the circle of the camp-fire, with half-a-dozen of my hunter comrades around it—once again give me that, and be welcome to the wealth I have accumulated, and the trivial honors I have gained—thrice welcome to the care and the toil that must still be exerted in retaining them."

The somber abstraction of their spirits was easily explained. The weird shape was fresh in their thoughts. They were still under the influence of an undefinable awe.

Account for the apparition as best they could, and laugh at it—as they at intervals affected to do—they could not clear their minds of this unaccountable incubus, nor feel satisfied with any explanation that had been offered.

The guide Spangler partook of the general sentiment, as did their leader, Calhoun.

The latter appeared more affected by it than any of the party. Seated with moody brow, from the fire, he had not spoken a word since the departure of the dragoons.

He seemed disposed to join the circle of those who were basking in the blaze; but kept himself apart, as if not caring to come under the scrutiny of his companions.

There was still the same wild look in his eyes—the same scared expression upon his features—that had shown itself before sunset.

"I say, Cash Calhoun!" cried one of the young fellows by the fire, who was beginning to "talk" under the influence of the oft-repeated potatoes—come up, old fellow, and join us in a drink! We all respect your sorrow; and will do what we can to get satisfaction, for you and yours. But a man mustn't always mope as you're doing. Come along here, and take a 'smile' of Monongahela! I'll do you a power of good, I promise you."

Whether it was that he was pleased at the interpretation put upon his silent attitude—whether he had become suddenly inclined to accept the feeling of good fellowship, Calhoun accepted the invitation, and stepping up to the fire, fell into line with the rest of the roysterers.

Before seating himself, he took a pull at the proffered flask.

From that moment the air changed, as if by enchantment. Instead of showing somber, he became eminently hilarious—so much so as to cause surprise to more than one of the party. The behavior seemed odd for a man, whose cousin was supposed to have been murdered that very morning.

Though commencing in the character of an invited guest, he soon exhibited himself as the host of the occasion. After the others had emptied their respective flasks, he proved himself possessed of a supply that seemed inexhaustible. Canteen after canteen came forth from his capacious saddle-bags—the legacy left by many departed friends, who had gone back with the major.

Partaking of these at the invitation of their leader—encouraged by his example—the young planter—"bloody" who encircled the camp-fire, talked, sung, danced, roared, and even rolled around it, until the alcohol could no longer keep them awake. Then, yielding to exhausted nature, they sunk back upon the sward, some, perhaps, to experience the dream slumber of a first intoxication.

The ex-officer of volunteers was the last of the number who laid himself along the grass.

If the last to lie down, he was the first to get up. Scarce had the carousal ceased—scarce had the sonorous breathing of his companions proclaimed them asleep—when he rose into an erect attitude, and with cautious steps stole out from among them.

With like stealthy tread he kept on to the confines of the camp—to the spot where his horse stood "hitched" to a tree.

Releasing the rein from its knot, and throwing it over the neck of the animal, he clam-

bered into the saddle, and rode noiselessly away.

In all these actions there was no evidence that he was intoxicated. On the contrary, they proclaimed a clear brain, bent upon some purpose previously determined.

"What could it be?"

Urged by affection, was he going forth to trace the mystery of the murder, by finding the murdered man? Did he wish to show his zeal by going alone?

Some such design might have been interpreted from a series of speeches that fell carelessly from his lips, as he rode through the chaparral.

"Thank God, there's a clear moon, and six good hours before those youngsters will think of getting to their feet. I'll have time to search every nook and corner of the thicket for a couple of miles around the place; and if the body be there I cannot fail to find it. But what could that thing have meant? If I'd been the only one to see it, I might have believed myself mad. But they all saw it—every one of them. Almighty heavens! what could it have been?"

The closing speech ended in an exclamation of terrified surprise—elicited by a spectacle that at the moment presented itself to the eyes of the ex-officer—causing him to rein up his horse, as if some dread danger was before him.

Coming in by a side path, he had arrived on the edge of the opening already described. He was just turning into it, when he saw that he was not the only horseman, who at that late hour was traversing the chaparral.

Another, to all appearance as well mounted as himself, was approaching along the avenue—not slowly as he, but in a quick trot.

Long before the stranger rider had come near, the moonlight, shining full upon him, enabled Calhoun to see that he was headless!

There could be no mistake about the observation. Though quickly made, it was complete. The white moonbeams, silvering his shoulders, were reflected from no face, above or between them! It could be no illusion of the moon's light. Calhoun had seen that same shape under the glare of the sun.

He saw more—the missing head, ghastly and gory, half-shrouded behind the hairy holsters! More still—he recognized the horse—the striped serape upon the shoulders of the rider—the water-guards upon his legs—the complete caparison—all the belongings of Maurice the mustanger.

He had ample time to take in these details. At a stand in the embouchure of the side path, terror held him transfixed to the spot. His horse appeared to share the feeling. Trembling in its tracks, the animal made no effort to escape; even when the headless rider pulled up in front, and, with a snorting, rearing steed, remained for a moment confronting the frightened party.

It was only after the blood bay had given utterance to a wild "whicker"—responded to by the howl of a howl close following at his heels—and turned into the avenue to continue his interrupted trot—only then that Calhoun became sufficiently released from the spell of horror to find speech.

"God of heaven!" he cried, in a quivering voice, "what can it mean? Is it man, or demon that mocks me? Has the whole day been a dream? Or am I mad—mad—mad?"

The scarce coherent speech was succeeded by action, instantaneous but determined. Whatever the purpose of his exploration, it was evidently abandoned; for, turning his horse with a wrench upon the rein, he rode back by the way he had come—only at a far faster pace, pausing not till he had re-entered the encampment.

Then stealing up to the edge of the fire, he lay down among the slumbering inebriates—not to sleep, but to stay trembling in their midst, till daylight disclosed a haggard pallor upon his cheeks, and ghastly glances sent forth from his sunken eyes.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A SECRET CONFIDED.

The first dawn of day witnessed an unusual stir in and around the hacienda of Casa del Corvo.

Its courtyard was crowded with men—armed, though not in the regular fashion. They carried long hunting-rifles, having a caliber of sixty to the pound; double-barreled shot-guns; single-barreled pistols; revolvers; knives with long blades; and even tomahawks!

In their varied attire of red flannel shirts, coats of colored blanket, and Kentucky jeans, trousers of "homespun" and blue "cotouade," hats of felt and caps of skin, tall boots of tanned leather, and leggings of buck—the stalwart men furnished a faithful picture of an assemblage, such as may be often seen in the frontier settlements of Texas.

Despite the *bizarrie* of their appearance, and the fact of their carrying weapons, there was nothing either to proclaim their object in thus coming together. Had it been for the most pacific purpose, they would have been armed and appeared just the same.

But their object is known.

A number of men so met, had been out on the day before, along with the dragoons. Others had now joined the assemblage—settlers who lived further away, and hunters who had been from home.

The muster on this morning was greater than on the preceding day—even exceeding the strength of the searching party when supplemented by the soldiers.

Though all were civilians, there was one portion of the assemblage crowd that could boast of an organization. Irregular it may be deemed, notwithstanding the name by which its members were distinguished. These were the "Regulators."

There was nothing distinctive about them, either in their dress, arms or equipments. A stranger would not have known a Regulator from any other individual. They knew one another.

Their talk was of murder—of the murder of Henry Pointdexter—coupled with the name of Maurice the mustanger.

Another subject was discussed of a somewhat cognate character. Those who had seen it were telling those who had not—of the strange spectacle that had appeared to them the evening before on the prairie.

Some were at first incredulous, and treated the thing as a joke. But the wholesale testimony—and the serious manner in which it was given—could not long be resisted; and the existence of the headless horseman became a universal belief.

Of course there was an attempt to account for the old phenomenon, and many forms of explanation were suggested. The only one that seemed to give even the semblance of satisfaction, was that already set forward by frontiersmen—that the horse was real enough, but the rider was a counterfeit.

For what purpose such a trick should be contrived, or who should be its contriver, no one pretended to explain.

For the business that had brought them together, there was but little time wasted in preparation. All were prepared already.

Their horses were outside, some of them held in hand by the servants of the establishment,

but most "hitched" to whatever would hold them.

They had come warned of their work, and only waited for Woodley Pointdexter—on this occasion their chief—to give the signal for setting forth.

He only waited in the hope of procuring a guide; one who could conduct them to the Alamo—who could take them to the domicile of Maurice the mustanger.

There was no such person present. Planters, merchants, shopkeepers, lawyers, hunters, horse and slave-dealers, were all alike ignorant of the Alamo.

There was but one man belonging to the settlement supposed to be capable of performing the required service—old Zeb Stump. But Zeb could not be found. He was absent on one of his staking expeditions; and the messengers sent to summon him were returning, one

I've heard him talk of your brother in the tall, east kind of farms. In course he hated your cousin Cash—'an' who doesn't, I shed like to know! Excuse me for sayin' it. As for the other, it ain't different. Ef that had been a quarrel 'an' hot blood between them—

"No—no!" cried the young Creole, forgetting herself in the agony of grief. "It was all over. Henry was reconciled. He said so: and Maurice—"

The astounded look of the listener brought a period to her speech. Covering her face with her hands, she buried her confusion in a flood of tears.

"Hoh—oh!" muttered Zeb; then he began something. "Dye say, Miss Lewaze, that war a quarrel between your brother—"

"Dear, dear Zeb!" cried she, removing her hands, and confronting the stalwart hunter with an air of earnest entreaty, "promise me, you will keep my secret? Promise it as a friend—as a brave, true-hearted man! You will—will you?"

The pledge was given by the hunter raising his broad palm, and extending it with a sonorous slap over the region of his heart.

In five minutes more he was in possession of a secret which woman rarely confides to man—except to him who can profoundly appreciate the confidence.

The hunter showed less surprise than might have been expected; merely muttering to himself—

"I thought it w'd come to somethin' o' the sort—specially arter they ere chase across the purayra."

"Wal, Miss Lewaze," he continued, speaking in a tone of kindly approval, "Zeb Stump don't see anythin' to be ashamed o' in all them weemen will be weemen all the world over—on the purayras or off o' them; an' ef ye have lost your young heart to the mowstanger, it w'd be the tallest kind o' a mistake to serpose ye've displaced your affections, as they calls it. Though he ar Irish, he ain't none o' the common sort; thet he ain't. As for the rest, I've been tellin' you, that it ar perfectly unnecessary for the mowstanger to hev d'ed the dark dead; that is, ef thar's been one d'ed at all. Let's hope thar's nothin' o' the kind. What proof hez been found? Only the hoss comin' home w' some rid spots on the saddle?"

"Alas! there is more. The people were all out yesterday. They followed a trail, and saw something, they would not tell me what. Father did not appear as if he wished me to know what they had seen; and I—fearing, for reasons, to ask the others. They've gone off again—only a short while—just as you came in sight on the other side."

"But the mowstanger? What do he say for himself?"

"Oh, I thought you knew. He has not been found neither. *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* He, too, may have fallen by the same hand that has struck down my brother!"

"Ye say they war on a trail! His'n, I serpose? If he be livin' he oughter be foun' at his shanty on the creek. Why didn't they go thar? Ah! now I think o' it, thar's nobody knows the adzack sitivation o' that ere dorny, elle 'ceptin' myself, I reckon; an' if it was that greenhorn Spangler as war guidin' o' them he'd niver be able to lift a trail across the chalk purayra. Hev they gone that way ag'in?"

"They have. I heard some of them say so. 'Wal, if they're gone in search o' the mowstanger I reckon I mout as well go too. I'll gie tall odds I find him afore they do."

"It is for that I've been so anxious to see you. There are many rough men along with papa. As they went away I heard them use wild words. They talked of lynching, and the like. Some of them swore terrible oaths of vengeance. Oh, my God! if they should find him, and he can not make clear his innocence, in the light of their angry passions—cousin Cassius among the number—you understand what I mean—who knows what may be done to him? Dear Zeb, for my sake—for his, whom you call friend—go! Reach the Alamo before them, and warn him of the danger! Your horse is slow. Take mine, or any one you can find in the stable."

"Thur's some truth in what you say," interrupted the hunter, preparing to move off. "Thur mout be small o' danger for the young fellar; an' I'll do what I kin to avert it. Don't be uneazy, Miss Lewaze. Thur's not sech a partickler hurry. Thet ere shanty ain't a goin' to be foun' 'thout a spell o' s'archin'. As to ridin' your spotty, I'll manage better on my ole maar. Besides, the critter ar red dy now if Plute hain't tuck off the saddle. Don't be greetin' your eyes out—thet's a good chile! Maybe it'll be all right yit 'bout your brother; and as to the mowstanger, I hain't no more suspishun o' his innersense than a unborn baby."

The interview ended by Zeb making obeisance in backwoodsman style, and striding out of the veranda; while the young Creole glided off to her chamber, to soothe her troubled spirit in supplications for his success.

CHAPTER XLVII. AN INTERPRETED EPISTLE.

URGED by the most abject fear, had El Coyote and his three comrades rushed back to their horses, and scrambled confusedly into the saddle.

They had no idea of returning to the jacale of Maurice Gould. On the contrary, their thought was to put space between themselves and the solitary dwelling, whose owner they had encountered riding toward it in such strange guise.

That it was "Don Mauricio" not one of them doubted. All four knew him by sight—Diaz better than any—but all well enough to be sure it was the *Indolente*. There was his horse, known to them; his *armas de agua* of jaguar-skin; his *Narajo* blanket, in shape differing from the ordinary serape of Saltillo—and his head.

They had not stayed to scrutinize the features; but the hat was still in its place—the sombrero of black glaze which Maurice was accustomed to wear. It had glanced in their eyes, as it came under the light of the moon.

Besides, they had seen the great dog, which Diaz remembered to be his. The staghound had sprung forward in the midst of the struggle, and with a fierce growl attacked the assailants—though it had not needed this to accelerate the retreat.

Fast as their horses could carry them, they rode through the bottom timber; and, ascending the bluff by one of its ravines—not that where they meant to commit murder—they reached the level of the upper plateau.

Not did they there for a single second; but galloping across the plain, re-entered the chaparral and spurred on to the place where they had so skillfully transformed themselves into Comanches.

The reverse metamorphosis, if not so carefully, was more quickly accomplished. In haste they washed the war-paint from their skins—availing themselves of some water carried in their canteens; in haste they dragged their civilized garments from the hollow tree,

in which they had hidden them; and putting them on in like haste, they once more mounted their horses, and rode toward the Leona.

On their homeward way they conversed only of the headless horseman; but with their thoughts under the influence of a supernatural terror, they could not satisfactorily account for an appearance so unprecedented; and they were still undecided as they parted company on the outskirts of the village—each going to his own jacale.

"Carra!" exclaimed the Coyote, as he stepped across the threshold of his hut, and dropped upon his cane couch. "Not much chance of sleeping after that. *Santos Dios!* such a sight! It has chilled the blood to the very bottom of my veins. And nothing here to warm me. The canteen empty; the posada shut up; everybody in bed!"

"*Madre de Dios!* what can it have been? Ghost it could not be; flesh and bones I grasped myself; so did Vicente on the other side! I felt that, or something very like it, under the tiger-skin. *Santissima!* it could not be a cheat!"

"If a contrivance, why and to what end? Who cares to play carnival on the prairies—except myself and my comrades? *Mi demonio!* what a grim masquerader!"

"*Carajo!* am I forestalled? Has some other had the offer, and earned the thousand dollars? Was it the *Indolente* himself, dead, decapitated, carrying his head in his hand?"

"Bah! it could not be—ridiculous, unlikely, altogether improbable!"

"But what then?"

"Hah! I have it! A hundred to one, I have it! He may have good warning of our visit, or, at least had suspicions of it. 'Twas a trick got up to try us—perhaps himself in sight, a witness of our disgraceful flight? *Maldito!*"

"But who could have betrayed us? No one. Of course no one could tell of that intent. How then should he have prepared such an infernal surprise?"

"Ah! I forgot. It was broad daylight as we made the crossing of the broad prairie. We may have been seen, and our purpose suspected? Just so—just so. And then, while we were making our toilette in the chaparral the other could have been contrived and effected. That, and that only, can be the explanation!"

"Fools! to have been frightened at a scare-crow!"

"*Carra!* it shan't long delay the event. To-morrow I go back to the Alamo. I'll think that thousand yet, if I should have to spend twelve months in earning it; and, whether or not, the dead shall be done all the same. Enough to lose Isidora. It may not be true; but the very suspicion of it puts me beside myself. If I but find out that she loves him—that they have met since—since—Mother of God! I shall go mad; and in my madness not only destroy the man I love, but the woman I love! Oh, Dona Isidora Covarubio de los Llanos! Angel of beauty, and demon of mischief! I could kill you with my caresses—I can kill you with my steel! One or the other shall be your fate, it is for you to choose between them!"

His spirit becoming a little tranquilized, partly through being relieved by this conditional threat—and partly from the explanation he had been able to arrive at concerning the other thought that had been troubling it—he soon after fell asleep.

Nor did he awake until daylight looked in at the door, and along with it a visitor.

"Jose!" he cried out in a tone of surprise, in which pleasure was perceptible—"you here?"

"*Si, señor; yo estoy.*"

"Glad to see you, Jose. The Dona Isidora here?—on the Leona, I mean?"

"*Si, señor.*"

"So soon again! She was here scarce two weeks ago, was she not? I was away from the settlement, but had word of it. I was expecting to hear from you, good Jose. Why did you not write?"

"Only, *Señor Don Miguel*, for want of a messenger that could be relied upon. I had something to communicate, that could not with safety be entrusted to a stranger. Something, I am sorry to say, you won't thank me for telling you; but my life is yours, and I promised you should know all!"

The "prairie wolf" sprung to his feet, as if pricked with a sharp-pointed thorn.

"Of her and him? I know it by your looks. Your mistress has met him?"

"No, *señor*, she hasn't—not that I know of—not since the first time."

"What, then?" inquired Diaz, evidently a little relieved. "She was here while he was at the posada. Something passed between them?"

"True, *Don Miguel*—something did pass, as I well know, being myself the bearer of it. Three times I carried him a basket of *dulces*, sent by the Dona Isidora—the last time also a letter."

"A letter! You know the contents? You read it?"

"Thanks to your kindness to the poor *peon* boy, I was able to do that; more still—to make a copy of it."

"You have one?"

"I have. You see, *Don Miguel*, you did not have me sent to school for nothing. This is what the Dona Isidora wrote to him."

Diaz reached out eagerly, and, taking hold of the piece of paper, proceeded to devour its contents.

It was a copy of the note that had been sent among the sweetmeats.

Instead of further exciting, it seemed rather to tranquilize him.

"*Carra!* he carelessly exclaimed, as he folded up the epistle. "There's not much in this, good Jose. It only proves that your mistress is grateful to one that has done her a service. If that's all—"

"But it is not all, *Señor Don Miguel*; and that's why I've come to see you now. I'm on an errand to the *pueblita*. This will explain it."

"Hah! Another letter?"

"*Si, señor!* This time the original itself, and not a poor copy scribbled by me."

With a shaking hand Diaz took hold of the paper, spread it out, and read:

"DEAR FRIEND—I am once more here, staying with uncle Silvio. Without hearing of you I could no longer exist. The uncertainty was killing me. Tell me if you are convalescent. Oh! that it may be so. I long to look into your eyes—those eyes so beautiful, so expressive—to make sure that your health is perfectly restored. Be good enough to grant me this favor. There is an opportunity. In a short half-hour from this time, I shall be on the top of the hill, above my uncle's house. Come, sir, come! ISIDORA COVARUBIO DE LOS LLANOS."

"*Carajo!* an assignment!" half-shrieked the indignant Diaz. "That and nothing else! She, too, the proposer. Hah! Her invitation shall be answered, though not by him for whom it is so cunningly intended. Kept to the hour, to the very minute; and by the Divinity of Vengeance—"

"Here, Jose! this note's of no use. The man to whom it is addressed isn't any longer in the *pueblita*, nor anywhere about here. God knows where he is! There's some mystery about it. No matter. You go to the posada, and make your inquiries all the same. You must do that to fulfill your errand. Never mind the *papeleta*; leave it with me. You can

have it to take to your mistress as you come back this way. Here's a dollar to get you drunk at the inn. *Señor Doffer* keeps the best kind of aguardiente. *Haste! luego!*"

Without staying to question the motive for these directions given to him, Jose, after accepting the *douceur*, yielded tacit obedience to them, and took his departure from the jacale.

He was scarce out of sight before Diaz stepped over its threshold. Hastily setting the saddle upon his horse, he sprang into it, and rode off in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER XLVIII. ISIDORA.

THE sun had just risen clear above the prairie horizon, his round disk still resting upon the sward, like a buckler of burnished gold. His rays are struggling into the chaparral, that here and there diversifies the savanna. The dew-heads yet cling upon the acacias, weighting their feathery fronds, and causing them to droop earthward, as if grieving after the departure of the night, whose cool breeze and moist atmosphere are more congenial to them than the fiery sirocco of day.

Though the birds are stirring—for what bird could sleep under the shine of such glorious sunrise?—it is almost too early to expect human beings abroad—elsewhere than upon the prairies of Texas. There, however, the hour of the sun's rising is the most enjoyable of the day; and few there are who spend it upon the unconscious couch, or in the solitude of the chamber.

By the banks of the Leona, some three miles below Fort Inge, there is one who has forsaken both, to stray through the chaparral. This early wanderer is not afoot, but astride a strong, spirited horse, that seems impatient at being checked in his paces. By this description you may suppose the rider to be a man; but remembering that the scene is in Southern Texas—still sparsely inhabited by a Spanio-Mexican population—you are equally at liberty to conjecture that the equestrian is a woman.

And this, too, despite the round hat upon the head—despite the serape upon the shoulders, worn as a protection against the chill morning air—despite the style of equitation, so *outré* to European ideas, since the days of La Duchesse de Berri; and still further, despite the crayon-like coloring on the upper lip, displayed in the shape of a pair of silken mustaches. More especially may this last mislead; and even may fancy, yourself looking upon some Spanish youth, whose dark but delicate features bespeak the *hijo de algo*, with a descent traceable to the times of the Cid.

If acquainted with the character of the Spanio-Mexican physiognomy, this last sign of virility does not decide you as to the sex. It may be that the rider in the Texan chaparral so distinguished, is, after all, a woman!

On closer scrutiny this proves to be the case. It is proved by the small hand clasping the bridle-rein; by the little foot, whose tiny toes just touch the stirrup—looking less in contrast with the huge wooden block that serves as a stirrup; by a certain softness of shape, and pleasing roundness of outline, perceptible even through the thick serape of Saltillo; and lastly, by the grand luxuriance of hair coiled up at the back of the head, and standing out in shining clump beyond the rim of the sombrero.

After noting these points you become convinced that you are looking upon a woman, though it may be one distinguished by certain idiosyncrasies. You are looking upon the Dona Isidora Covarubio de los Llanos.

You are struck by the strangeness of her costume, still more so by the way she sits her horse, in your eyes, unaccustomed to Mexican modes, both may appear odd—unfeminine—perhaps indecorous.

The Dona Isidora has no thought—not even a suspicion—of there being any thing odd in either. Why should she? She is but following the fashion of her country and her kindred. In neither respect is she peculiar.

She is young, but yet a woman. She has seen twenty summers, and perhaps one more. Passed under the sun of a Southern sky, it is needless to say that her girlhood is long since gone by.

Of beauty there is no sign of decadence. She is fair to look upon, as in her "buen quince" (beautiful fifteen). Perhaps fairer. Do not suppose that the dark lining on her lip damages the feminine expression of her face. Rather does it add to its attractiveness. Accustomed to the glowing complexion of the Saxon blonde, you may at first sight deem it a deformity. Do not pronounce, till you have looked again. A second glance—and my word for it—you will modify your opinion. A third will do away with your indifference; a fourth change it to admiration!

Of course, in so young a woman, and in your becoming convinced that a woman wearing a mustache—young, beautiful, and brunette—is one of the grandest sights which a beneficent Nature offers to the eye of man.

It is presented in the person of Isidora Covarubio de los Llanos. If there is any thing feminine in her face, it is not this; though it may strengthen a wild, almost fierce expression, at times discernible, when her white teeth gleam conspicuously under the sable shadow of the "bigotie."

Even then is she beautiful; but, like that of the female jaguar, 'tis a beauty that inspires fear rather than affection.

At all times it is a countenance that bespeaks for its owner the possession of mental attributes not ordinarily bestowed upon her sex. Firmness, determination, courage—carried to the extreme of reckless daring—are all legible in its lines. In its cunningly-carved features, slight, sweet and delicate, there is no sign of fainting or fear. The crimson that has struggled through the brown skin of her cheeks would scarce forsake them in the teeth of the deadliest danger.

She is riding alone through the timbered bottom of the Leona. There is a house not far off; but she is leaving it behind her. It is the hacienda of her uncle, Don Silvio Martinez, from the portals of which she has late issued forth.

She sits in her saddle as firmly as the skin that covers it. It is a spirited horse, and has the habit of showing it by his prancing paces. But you have no fear for the rider; you are satisfied of her power to control him.

A light lazo, suited to her strength, is suspended from her saddle-bow. Its careful coil shows that it is never neglected. This almost assures you that she understands how to use it. She does—can throw it with the skill of a mustanger.

The accomplishment is one of her conceits; a part of the idiosyncrasy already acknowledged.

She is riding along a road—not the public one that follows the direction of the river. It is a private way leading from the hacienda of her uncle, running into the former near the summit of a hill—the hill itself being only the bluff that abuts upon the bottom-lands of the Leona.

She ascends the sloping path—steep enough to try the breathing of her steed. She reaches the crest of the ridge, along which trends the road belonging to everybody.

She reins up; though not to give her horse

an opportunity of resting. She has halted, because of having reached the point where her excursion is to terminate.

There is an opening on one side of the road, of circular shape, and having a superficies of some two or three acres. It is grass-covered and treeless—a prairie in *petto*. It is surrounded by the chaparral forest—very different from the bottom timber out of which she has just emerged. On all sides is the inclosing thicket of spinous plants, broken only by the embouchures of three paths, their triple openings scarce perceptible from the middle of the glade.

Near its center she had pulled up, patting her horse upon the neck to keep him quiet. It is not much needed. The scaling of the "cuesta" has done that for him. He has no inclination either to go on, or tramp impatiently in his place.

"I am before the hour of appointment," mutters she, drawing a gold watch from under her serape, "if, indeed, I should expect him at all. He may not come? God grant that he be able!"

"I am trembling! Or is it the breathing of the horse? *Valga me Dios*, no! 'Tis my own poor nerves!"

"I never felt so before! Is it fear? I suppose it is."

"'Tis strange though—to fear the man I love—the only one I ever have loved: for it could not have been love I had for Don Miguel. A girl's fancy. Fortunate for me to have got cured of it! Fortunate my discovering him to be a coward. That disenchanted me—quite dispelled the romantic dream in which he was the foremost figure. Thank my good stars for the disenchantment; for now I hate him, now that I hear he has grown—*Santissima!* can it be true that he has become a—*Salteador?*"

"And yet I should have no fear of meeting him—not even in this lone spot!"

"*Ay de mí!* Fearing the man I love, whom I believe to be of kind, noble nature—and having no dread of him I hate, and know to be cruel and remorseless! 'Tis strange—incomprehensible!"

"No—there is nothing strange in it. I tremble not from any thought of danger—only the danger of not being loved. That is why I now shiver in my saddle—why I have not had one night of tranquil sleep since my deliverance from those drunken savages."

"I have never told him of this; nor did I know how he may receive the confession. It must and shall be made. I can endure the uncertainty no longer. In preference I choose despair—death, if my hopes deceive me!"

"Hah! There is a hoof-stroke! A horse comes down the road! It is his! Yes. I see glancing through the trees the bright hues of our national costume. He delights to wear it. No wonder; it so becomes him!"

"*Santa Virgen!* I'm under a serape, with a sombrero on my head. He'll mistake me for a man! Oh, ye ugly disguises and let me seem what I am—a woman!"

Scarcely quicker could be the transformation in a pantomime. The casting off the serape reveals a form that Hebe might have envied; the removal of the hat, a head that would have inspired the chisel of Canova!

A splendid picture is exhibited in that solitary glade; worthy of being framed, by its bordering of spinous trees, whose hirsute arms seem stretched out to protect it.

A horse of symmetrical shape, half-backed upon his haunches, with nostrils spread to the sky, and tail sweeping the ground; on his back one whose aspect and attitude suggest a commingling of grand, though somewhat incongruous ideas, uniting to form a picture, statuesque as beautiful.

The pose of the rider is perfect. Half-sitting in the saddle, half-standing upon the stirrup, every undulation of her form is displayed—the limbs just enough relaxed to show that she is a woman.

Notwithstanding what she has said, on her face there is no fear—at least no sign to betray it. There is no quivering lip—no blanching of the cheeks.

The expression is altogether different. It is a look of love—couched under a proud confidence, such as that with which the she-eagle awaits the wooing of her mate.

You deem the picture overdrawn—perhaps pronounce it unfeminine.

And yet it is a copy from real life—true as I can remember it; and more than once had I the opportunity to fix it in my memory.

The attitude is altered, and with the suddenness of a *coup d'éclair*; the change being caused by recognition of the horseman who comes galloping into the glade. The shine of the gold-laced vestments had misled her. They are worn not by Maurice Gerald, but by Miguel Diaz.

Bright looks became black. From her seat in the saddle she subsides into an attitude of listlessness—despairing rather than indifferent; and the second sound that escapes her lips, as for an instant they part over her pearl-like teeth, is less a sigh than an exclamation of chagrin.

There is no sign of fear in the altered attitude—only disappointment, dashed with defiance.

El Coyote speaks first.

"*Ella! s'no'ria*, who'd have expected to find your ladyship in this lonely place—yasting your sweetness on the thorny chaparral?"

"In what way can it concern you, *Don Miguel Diaz?*"

"Absurd question, *s'no'ria!* You know it can, and does; and the reason why. You well know how madly I love you. Fool I was to confess it, and acknowledge myself your slave. 'Twas that that cooled you so quickly."

"You are mistaken, *señor*. I never told you I loved you. If I did admire your feats of horsemanship, and said so, you had no right to construe it as you've done. I meant no more than that I admired them—not you. 'Tis three years ago. I was a girl then, of an age when such things have a fascination for our eyes—when we are foolish enough to be caught by personal accomplishments rather than moral attributes. I am now a woman. All that is changed, as it ought to be."

"*Carra!* Why did you fill me with false hopes? On the day of the *herrerado*, when I conquered the fiercest bull and tamed the wildest horse in your father's herds—a horse not one of his *vaqueiros* dared so much as lay hands upon—that day you smiled—ay, looked love upon me. You need not deny it, Dona Isidora! I had experience, and could read the expression—could tell your thoughts, as they were then. They are changed, and why? Because I was conquered by your charms, or rather because I was the silly fool to acknowledge it; and you, like all women, once you had won and knew it, no longer cared for your conquest. It is true, *s'no'ria*; it is true."

"It is not, *Don Miguel Diaz*. I never gave you word or sign to say that I loved, or thought of you otherwise than as an accomplished cavalier. You appeared so then—perhaps were so. What are you now? You know what's said of you, both here and on the Rio Grande?"

"I scorn to reply to calumny—whether it proceeds from false friends or lying enemies. I have come here to demand explanations, not to give them."

"From whom?"

"From your sweet self, Dona Isidora."

"You are presumptive, *Don Miguel Diaz!* Think, *señor*, to whom you are addressing yourself. Remember, I am the daughter of—"

"One of the proudest *hacendados* in Tamaulipas, and niece to one of the proudest in Texas. I have thought of all that; and thought, too, that I was once a *hacendado* myself and am now only a hunter of horses. *Carra!* what of that? You're not the woman to despise a man for the inferiority of his rank. A poor mustanger stands as good a chance in your eyes as the owner of a hundred herds. In that respect, I have proof of your generous spirit!"

"What proof?" asked she, in a quick, entreating tone, and for the first time showing signs of uneasiness. "What evidence of the generosity you are so good as to ascribe to me?"

"This pretty epistle I hold in my hand, indited by the Dona Isidora Covarubio de los Llanos, to one who, like myself, is but a dealer in horse-flesh. I need not submit it to very close inspection. No doubt you can identify it at some distance?"

She could, and did; as was evidenced by her starting in the saddle—by her look of angry surprise directed upon Diaz.

"*Señor!* how came you in possession of this?" she asked, without any attempt to disguise her indignation.

"It matters not. I am in possession of it, and of what for many a day I have been seeking; a proof, not that you had ceased to care for me—for this I had good reason to know—but that you love him—words could not speak plainer. You long to look into his beautiful eyes. *Mi demonio!* you shall never see them again!"

"What means this, *Don Miguel Diaz?*"

The question was put not without a slight quivering of the voice that seemed to betray fear. No wonder it should. There was something in the aspect of El Coyote at that moment well calculated to inspire the sentiment.

Observing it, he responded: "You may well show fear: you have reason. If I have lost you, my lady, no other shall enjoy you. I have made up my mind about that."

"About what?"

"What I have said—that no other shall call you his, and least of all Maurice the mustanger."

"Indeed?"

"Ay, indeed! Give me a promise that you and he shall never meet again, or you depart not from this place!"

"You are jesting, *Don Miguel?*"

"I am in earnest, Dona Isidora."

The manner of the man too truly betrayed the sincerity of his speech. Coward as he was there was a cold, cruel determination in his looks, while his hand was seen straying toward the hilt of his machete.

Despite her Amazonian courage, the woman could not help a feeling of uneasiness. She saw there was a danger, with but slight chance of averting it. Something of this she had felt from the first moment of the encounter; but she had been sustained by the hope, that the unpleasant interview might be interrupted by one who would soon change its character.

During the early part of the dialogue she had been eagerly listening for the sound of the horse's hoof—casting occasional and furtive glances through the chaparral, in the direction where she hoped to hear it.

This hope was no more. The sight of her own letter told its tale: it had not reached its destination.

Deprived of this hope—hitherto sustaining her—she next thought of retreating from the spot.

But this too presented both difficulties and dangers. It was possible for her to wheel round and gal

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To Commence Next Week!

MRS. MARY REED CROWELL'S
New Serial Story.

TWO GIRLS' LIVES; OR, STRANGELY-CROSSED PATHS.

The web of some lives is woven of strangely tangled threads, and to the keen reader of hearts many a real experience offers more to startle and interest than any creation of pure fiction.

That this lady is a very close observer our readers have had ample evidence. Her stories are so lifelike that they seem episodes of a secret personal or family history; and, wrought out, in character and act, with great fitness and power, her narratives always command a deeply-absorbed attention.

This new serial is a romance of two girls' lives—one a true woman, the other what a frivolous nature and a false social education make her. It is a story of antagonisms and wrongs and suffering and rewards that none will read without an abiding and sympathetic interest; and all will learn from its perusal the grand strength there is in purity and devotion to correct principle.

Our Arm-Chair.

Rather Hard on Them.—We have been blessed with a swarm of foreign lecturers, during the last two years. This country, it would seem, is regarded in Great Britain, as fallow ground, upon which the Queen's subjects are to sow their wit and wisdom—all for a consideration. The *London Athenaeum*, taking cognizance of this new market for British accomplishments, rather severely deals with this literary business. It says:

"The financial panic in America has caused the withdrawal of the proposals made to many Englishmen of letters who were invited to deliver lectures in the United States. The high prices offered were tempting, and it seemed for a time that a new source of emolument was opening up to a not overpaid profession. The Zoo, on the other hand, will profit by the panic; for American competition was forcing up the price of animals at a rate sufficient to alarm even a wealthy society like that which has its gardens in the Regent's Park, and a rhinoceros or tapir was becoming a fearfully costly purchase."

Which is much more unkind than any jealous Yankee would dare to be. Every thing foreign "takes" in this country, from a tooth-powder to a Prima Donna, and the laugh comes in when it is found that these imported novelties we pay three times more than, by any rule of common sense, they are worth. There is no denying that "we Americans" rather enjoy being humbugged by Johnny Bull or Jean Crapeau.

A Show.—We are told that, at a Fifth avenue party, recently, a certain lady literally blazed with diamonds. On each of her shoulders she had four stars, the size of silver half-dollars, made of diamonds. Her hair was set very thickly with diamonds, and her head seemed adorned with them. There was a diamond band upon her brow. She had diamond earrings and a diamond necklace of magnificent proportions. Upon the two sides of her chest were two circles of diamonds, about the size of the palm of the hand. From them depended lilies and curves of diamonds reaching to her waist, round which she wore a diamond girdle. On the skirts of her dress in front were two large peacocks, wrought of lines of diamonds. There were rosettes of diamonds on her slippers. There were diamonds, large or small, but in every variety of form, all over her dress and person, wherever they could be artistically placed.

To which we say: well, what of it? Did this display add one atom to her real charms? Did it give her a drop more of goodness—a feather's weight more of mind? If it did not, then her diamonds were a mere sign of her husband's bank account—perhaps; though it is by no means true that those who blaze in diamonds have a good bank balance. On the contrary, it is well known that discreet business-men suspect a fellow business-man when his wife and daughters dash out in diamonds. In the case above cited the lady might have been, and probably was, the honest possessor of her jewels, but that possessors was nothing to envy. A beautiful gem or two looks well on any lady. A coat of mail of them is simply a vulgar show.

Chat.—A contemporary, remarking upon a certain fact, says: "It is curious that in circulating libraries fiction almost always comprises just about seventy-five per cent of the circulation." We see nothing curious about it. Would it be curious if, instead of fiction, three-quarters of the readers called for history or biography? It would only show what was the popular taste; and that this taste is for fiction first is so patent that it only becomes curious when any thing else is first read. When will these wise men who want to direct and order public taste learn that their own taste is no criterion whatever? If generation after generation, fiction is popular, and is demanded by persons of all degrees, is it not about time that "the critics" should see in that fact a fundamental principle of intellectual prescience? We should think so. It is a principle how so well recognized that the old-time trade against fiction is as absurd as Cotton Mather's horror of witches. Fiction is a very good thing when it is good, as it ought always to be; and the paper which places such reading before the public, at very modest cost, is doing a very pleasing and a beneficial work.

—There's a lesson even in extravagance which those who will may read. It is this: the prettiest things, the neatest things, the most enjoyable and serviceable things are not so by virtue of their cost. On the contrary, the more extravagant and costly an article of wear or use the less it is practically a success. Take the matter of bonnets, or cloaks, or dresses, or lace or shawls, a bonnet that costs \$50 is about as absurd as an inverted crown's nest and not a whit more tasty: a cloak

so as to cover the greater part of the feet; the sleeves descending to the wrists, were arranged in small rolls or wrinkles as high as the elbows. The exterior garment—gunna or gown—was a long robe with loose sleeves, confined with a girdle adorned with embroidery, for which the Anglo-Saxon ladies were so famed. The mantle, an essential part of the dress, hung down before and behind, except when looped up by the raised arms. No change for three centuries took place in its form or in the manner of wearing it. But the most indispensable part of dress appropriated to the Anglo-Saxon woman was the kerchief, by the Normans called *couvrechef*, or head-dress, always worn out of doors. Its breadth was sufficient to reach from the top of the forehead to the shoulders, and covered the head completely so that no part of the hair could be seen. It was usually tied round the neck so as entirely to cover the chest, one end of it being sometimes left loose, flowing on one side or the other of the shoulders, and must have been of great elegance. It was worn of various colors—green, blue, or red. Although the kerchief completely concealed the hair, yet this was carefully cherished, and allowed to grow most luxuriantly, probably twisted and curled with irons, like that of men, whose flowing golden hair often hung down on either side of their shoulders. Edward the Confessor is recorded to have worn his so long that Bishop Wulfstan preached a sermon against the fashion in the king's presence; but finding his words unheeded, when any of the nobles bent down before him to receive his blessing, he cut off a lock of hair with a sharp knife he kept in his pocket for that purpose, enjoining him, under dreadful judgments, to sever the rest.

SOME TIMELY ADVICE.

I KNOW I preach a good deal about individuals possessed of bitterness of spirit, and advise them to get rid of it, and I really like to own medicine myself and endeavor to be a good girl, but, just as I am enjoying that frame of mind, I read something in a newspaper that ruffles the surface of my temper and vexes me a great deal, and am feeling just that way now. Do you wonder what is the matter now?

I am going to tell you. It is just this paragraph that I read, not a great while ago: "Just after the news of the loss of the Atlantic reached one of the colleges, a witty student remarked, 'Quite a surprise party to the Lord.'"

I don't call him witty. I call him a heartless and blasphemous wretch, deserving of as much punishment as the vilest ruffian upon the earth. If that is a specimen of wit I shall drop all as such a disaster—of speaking so lightly of the hundreds hurried into eternity—of making merry over a calamity that appalled the world and brought tears of sorrow to the eyes of the bereaved!

I don't fancy the character of an editor much who would be willing to give publicity to such remarks. It ought to be the ambition of an editor to elevate the taste of his readers, and not degrade it. There are plenty of subjects for wit and humor without making sport over the anguish of the living, the memory of the dead, and using the Lord's name for a jest.

People are altogether too reckless in the remarks they make, and many editors are not considerate enough in the matter they allow in the make-up of their paper. It is not only worldly affairs that they make free with; they often take a passage of the Scripture as their target for fun—if fun it can be called—making light of many holy and precious truths. The only excuse they can plead is ignorance—not knowing enough of the Scriptures to be aware of what they are doing—or indifference, not caring more for the Bible than for any other book.

A man or a woman who can make light of sacred things, or see fun in others' afflictions, will not prove very congenial society; I don't want any such folks around me. I want the companionship of those who have hearts—who have enough love and veneration for their Maker to respect his word and follow it, and quote it for the bettering of the world, and not make use of it as a subject for levity or sport; who have affection enough for their fellow-beings to assuage their griefs, and not make fun of them—to heal the wounds by kindness, and not to open them more by unseemly jokes—perhaps heartless would be the better word.

If the remarks which gave me the thought to write on this subject are to form the staple of newspaper literature, how few of us there are will ever care to look at a "daily" or a "weekly." It is easy enough to discriminate between what is proper to be published and what is not. Put this question to yourselves: "Would I like to have such a paragraph placed before my eyes if I were in affliction?" If your conscience answers in the negative, don't publish it—we'll think more of you for doing so. You are to enter the lists of the "wits," and they are not the ones to applaud what is unseemly.

If we want the better day to dawn we must have fun without vulgarity, wit without profanity or blasphemy, and without personality or at the expense of others' misfortunes. I vote for that day; don't you?

EVE LAWLESS.

MARRIAGE AMONG THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

WHEN the Anglo-Saxons settled in Britain, the patriarchal system was in full force. The father was absolute master in his own family; he held his daughter in marriage, his son in slavery. When St. Augustine landed in the island, the maiden was a simple article of property, her price fixed at so many head of cattle. The primitive mode of procuring a wife was this. When a youth had his choice upon a maiden, he went with a band of friends and carried her off, probably with her own secret connivance. The relations followed in hot pursuit; a feud between the families ensued, and was only appeased by the lover agreeing to pay the value fixed upon by the father for retaining possession of the maiden, he giving a "wed," or security for his performance of the contract—hence the word wedding. This custom of stealing the bride is as ancient as the Spartans, and is still kept up in Brittany, where it forms one of the ceremonies of the marriage festivities.

The bargain made, the amount of the "morning gift" fixed upon, the contracting parties took each other by the hand and proclaimed themselves man and wife; the ring was placed on the first finger of the left hand; and the father, having received the purchase-money, delivered his daughter over to her husband.

The transfer of authority was made by a symbolic gift; the father delivered the bride's shoe to the bridegroom, and the latter touched her over the head with it—a ceremony which took its origin in the custom of placing the foot on the neck of a slave, and was typical of the wife's subjection to her husband—a ceremony still preserved in the popular custom of "throwing the shoe."

The day after the wedding the bridegroom gave the "morning" gift—supposed to be voluntary, but according to the value stipulated. It was general among the Teuton race, and often estates of some value were thus bestowed. When Athelstan's sister, Edgitha, married the Emperor Otto, his morning gift was the city of Magdeburg.

To its bridal attire we have yet to allude; whether it differed from the usual costume we are unable to say. The garments worn by the Anglo-Saxon women were few and simple. An under-garment, sometimes of linen, sometimes of various colors, reached nearly to the ground,

so as to cover the greater part of the feet; the sleeves descending to the wrists, were arranged in small rolls or wrinkles as high as the elbows. The exterior garment—gunna or gown—was a long robe with loose sleeves, confined with a girdle adorned with embroidery, for which the Anglo-Saxon ladies were so famed.

The mantle, an essential part of the dress, hung down before and behind, except when looped up by the raised arms. No change for three centuries took place in its form or in the manner of wearing it.

But the most indispensable part of dress appropriated to the Anglo-Saxon woman was the kerchief, by the Normans called *couvrechef*, or head-dress, always worn out of doors. Its breadth was sufficient to reach from the top of the forehead to the shoulders, and covered the head completely so that no part of the hair could be seen. It was usually tied round the neck so as entirely to cover the chest, one end of it being sometimes left loose, flowing on one side or the other of the shoulders, and must have been of great elegance. It was worn of various colors—green, blue, or red.

Although the kerchief completely concealed the hair, yet this was carefully cherished, and allowed to grow most luxuriantly, probably twisted and curled with irons, like that of men, whose flowing golden hair often hung down on either side of their shoulders. Edward the Confessor is recorded to have worn his so long that Bishop Wulfstan preached a sermon against the fashion in the king's presence; but finding his words unheeded, when any of the nobles bent down before him to receive his blessing, he cut off a lock of hair with a sharp knife he kept in his pocket for that purpose, enjoining him, under dreadful judgments, to sever the rest.

The Anglo-Saxons were celebrated throughout Europe for their jewelry and their gold filigree ornaments. Rings and bracelets were not abundant, for they cared more for the decoration of their necks. Necklaces of various colors, blue, yellow, red, and white beads of various coating, a single lump of amber drilled and worn about the neck as a preservative against witchcraft; a filigree gold fibula, set with garnets, enamel or glass paste, were their chief jewels, and an ornament dependent from the waist, a kind of chataine, held the keys of the chest, cupboard and store, a knife, scissors, toothpick, bodkin, needles, tweezers, and other necessities for needlework or the toilet.

The Anglo-Saxon tenement consisted of an outer wall or earthwork, inclosing the yard or court; the chief room was the hall; here the family dined, and many slept. Little rooms were set apart for the ladies outside, detached from the building; the "bur," or "bower," as it was termed, the walls hung with tapestry of their own workmanship; for the Anglo-Saxon ladies were much skilled in the works of the needle. Here they worked and taught their children. Alfred's lessons were the teaching of his mother, Osburga. And most rigidly did they bring up their children and servants, enforcing obedience even to the administering of corporal punishment. King Ethelred's mother was on one occasion so incensed against her son, that, not being at hand, she beat him with candles, which caused him so to dread them all his life that he would never allow them to be lighted in his presence. In the discharge of her household occupations, the care of her children, needlework, and the cultivation of her garden flowers, the Anglo-Saxon wife passed her time peacefully and happily in the quiet discharge of her several duties in the station of life to which it had pleased Providence to call her.

Foolscap Papers.

WHEN I was chief of police in the city of Smalltown, the protectors of the city were obliged to work under the following

My Police.

RULES AND REGULATIONS:
If any member of this police force is caught in a larger beer saloon he will have to stand treat.

It will be the duty of this force to break up all gambling houses, but if they try the old plan of doing this and get broke themselves it will be the fault of the chief.

Every policeman shall be obliged to draw his pay under penalty of fine and imprisonment. Of late they don't seem to care anything about this duty and it must be remedied.

Every policeman is expected to wake up as soon after a row as is convenient, and it shall be his duty to use his utmost power to get somebody to go in and stop it.

No member of this force is allowed to sleep at his post—when there are any door-steps laid.

Police carrying Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup around in their pockets will be being something entirely unnecessary and be fined in consequence.

It will be the duty of each member to see the ladies get safely over the street-crossings. The best looking to be taken over first. The American women must be protected.

Each policeman must do his very best to dry up the saloons in his ward, the old plan of trying to drink them dry will be considered played out.

Every member found drunk on his post will in all cases have that post run down his throat or will be strung up on it.

Any man who wantonly and recklessly seizes a member of this force to death shall be convicted of murder in three degrees.

If any rough should so far forget the majesty of the law as to draw a knife on a policeman that policeman shall draw away from there.

Night-policemen are earnestly requested to leave their naps at home where it is convenient.

Where a policeman seizes a burglar in the act of picking a lock, and is assured that his intention is to commit burglary, it shall be his bounden duty to cough and scare him away. Property must be protected at all hazards.

Policemen will be expected to be within a mile of all cases of disturbance, whether they are or not. This rule will be rigidly enforced.

Police finding drunken men reeling around will take them to the station-house, where they will become stationary.

Policemen who don't discharge their duty it will be my duty to discharge.

If any man snatches up a policeman and runs off with him, he shall be convicted of highway robbery. Such outrages will not be allowed in a civil community.

No policeman will be allowed to excuse himself from arresting burglars on the plea of not wishing to go into bad company.

For every arrest a member makes he will be allowed one dollar; for every arrest he doesn't make he will be allowed still more.

Mileage will be allowed at the rate of fifty cents a mile in case of a chase; but not if the policeman is the one who is chased. In that case fifty cents a mile will be deducted from his wages.

In a row if a policeman should hit the

wrong man he must take the lick back, or its equivalent in currency.

If a rowdy should happen to shoot at a policeman it shall be the policeman's duty to shoot away from there.

In case of a street fight if any member happens to be on hand, a few minutes after it is over, he must arrest one or two of the bystanders, as the reputation for efficiency of this force must be maintained.

No policeman will be allowed to go into a saloon unless he wants to see a man—the man behind the counter won't do.

It is expected that every member will do his duty—or hire a hand.

In case of a murder policeman will not be allowed, in their zeal, to arrest the dead man. They will be obliged to arrest other peoples' attention, especially where other peoples' attention is rude and boisterous.

No policeman will be permitted to be imposed upon or abused by any man. This thing is about played out. They will be fined and re-fined thoroughly.

People must not suspect, because they see a policeman with his eyes shut, that he isn't keeping a sly watch around. Many are needlessly maligned that way. Justice never sleeps.

If any epidemic disease gets to running around loose about town it will be expected that this force will promptly arrest it.

Each member will show his bringing up in the way in which he brings others up.

April-fooling policeman of this town must be stopped; it is entirely too common.

All members of the club will make their reports to WASHINGTON WHITEHORN, Chief of Police.

Woman's World.

THE HAT ADVENT.

SOCIETY, with an ineffable sigh of satisfaction, comprehends at last what to wear, and when, where, and how to wear it. Bonnets claim the first attention, as the apex to the elaborate pyramid. From the far-famed houses of Mantel and Therese, Magnier, Virot and Groux, whose magic names alone stamp perfection on a bonnet, come the oddest, quaintest things imaginable—the high, aristocratic Castilian hat, like the Peak of Teneriffe, with rather more table-land upon a broader summit, as conical as it is coquettish, as beautiful as it is bizarre, and as dear as it is cheap; the Babas enlarged, the superb Directoire, and the dainty, soft-crowned, pretty Charlotte Corday.

There is, naturally, a Medici, to wear with the stiff Medici costumes into which women are to be incased as in stiffest armor. This Medici is a hybrid mixture of hat and bonnet. Tennyson's Nose of Lynette, last year, inspired the modistes, and we had "tip-tilted Lynettes;" this season the same pretty noses will appear beneath various styles of saucy Gipsies, but it must be understood that the broad-brimmed Gipsy, or Charles II. flat, with wide, graceful brims, turned up with rustic flowers, is not for the severe Roman, or Greek, or learned aquiline—only the pretty "tip-tilted" or *nez retroussé*. Exquisite simplicity is combined with richness in the bonnets of Virot; the trimming is less compact, and there is a profusion of gracefully arranged lace drapery, quite as necessary to a bonnet as sails to a ship.

To describe a few models: A gray chip had a low crown encircled by a loose twisted roll of gray turquoise silk, another smaller roll passed around the brim, each of the two silks folds being edged with narrow, closely-curved, gray ostrich-feather fringe, laid in long rows from crown to brim were fine wreaths of purple violets, ending behind in a full cluster of gray bows of silk, ostrich tips and violets.

A Castilian hat was of black, fine chip, turned up in the bolero style, the crown enveloped in a black faille scarf knotted in front of the brim, disclosing scarlet borders; behind, a half-wreath of scarlet poppies, ears of wheat, field daisies and rose-buds.

Another lot of snowy chip was a mass of fine field flowers, satin, golden-eyed Marguerites, wild roses and ferns; a long scarf of black thread lace, made in cascade at the back, fell over a torsade of black velvet and fall green turquoise.

A hat of charming grace was entirely composed of black, jet-beaded net, a black tulle ruche inside the brim, edged with jet, and bows of the same enclosing a mass of delicate straw immortelles; this for a grade of light mourning.

Another of black chip, with the chip plaited cape, a feature of these new hats, descended considerably at the back, half covered by a scarf of black lace; at the side and passing around the crown was a wreath of cherry blossoms and blue forget-me-nots.

Some of the black lace hats are covered with a glittering mass of cut jet beads, small bugles, and large sprays of fine jet flowers.

An English straw hat had a wide brim, bent low in front, curled high at the sides, and falling in a plaited straw cape behind. At the left ear a lovely tau-rose was fastened, long loops of maize-colored ribbon on top of the crown and at the back, with dark red poppies and dusky foliage.

A very *distingue* hat of leghorn was turned up at the back, deep at the ears, trimmed with pale olive and maize ribbon, and a cluster of large Marguerites, buds and foliage.

Now, ladies, you have the mystery of the last week's "openings" all opened to you: take your choice. Next week we will tell you all about the flowers, etc., to wear on these stylish chapeaux, and perhaps you'll go not to the most expensive milliner, but go to work and make your own new hat? Ah, that will be a nice thing to do. An article of wear is ever so much better if the wearer has made it—that is, providing it can subserve true economy, as in the matter of bonnets it is pretty sure to do.

The lady who can't trim her own hat isn't qualified to be president of the Model Women's Association nor corresponding secretary of the Independent Order of Sorosis.

A BRILLIANT STORY

OF
A Brilliant Author!

We shall soon give the opening chapters of Capt. Frederick Whittaker's new and most captivating romance.

THE IRISH CAPTAIN.

A TALE OF FONTENOY.

Advancing in the field of historic romance, of which "The Brothers of the Star Cross" was the opening, this enchanting author now gives the reader a leaf from the past which is literally alive with its men, women and events—all contributing to a story of the most passionate and personal interest, which will commend it to the reading of all classes. Such romance is both a head and heart delight; and readers of the SATURDAY JOURNAL will place it among their literary good things of the year.

Readers and Contributors.

To Correspondents and Authors.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage. MSS. presented to the editor are held available MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MSS. "copy," third, length. Of less MSS. equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its folio or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

The following, for various reasons, we must place on the list of "declined" contributions, viz.: "Only a Clerk," "Two Ways of Spending a Christmas," "Light Thoughts," "A Hearty Meal," "My Princess," "A Rosalind in March," "The Arkansas Game," "Sol Somer's Big Lie."

The serials, "A Broken Shrine" and "The Empty Heart," we must decline. Neither are up to the standard of serial writing. We hold the two manuscripts subject to order.

We can use: "Reading a Woman's Heart," "A May Basket," "A Detective's Story," "A Review," "All a Mistake," "The Master of Grace," "A Two-Fold Game," "Pain," "Jerry Link's Bet," "A Mad Career," "Mind Over Matter," "The Prisoner."

BELLA M. L. We know nothing about that purchasing agency.

ARTHUR Z. We never return MSS. at our own expense.

An author who is too lazy to number his manuscript pages is sure to be rejected when he proposes. And he ought to be.

A. A. Aida is pronounced *Ida*.

A. I. We will "Omnibus" your "Terrible Tale."

Geo. W. E. F. Numbers named now are almost all out of print.

A. B. C. "The expression, 'She woke up,' is uncorrectly although not grammatically improper. She couldn't very well wake down. What you mean to say is, 'She awoke.' The expressions, 'Rose up,' 'Descended down,' etc., are also incorrect."

Mrs. BRANT R. We believe none of the direct descendants of Joseph Brant are living. Molly Brant, Thawandanequa's sister, was a descendant of human nature. The Brant family is now in Canada. It is by the Brant family, as perpetuated by the said Molly, Sir William Johnson never married this "Indian Princess." His two daughters were the only women grown when Molly was in her eighteenth year.

ORPHAN. It is very difficult to get rid of the vermin in a thick head of hair. The only remedy is the fine-tooth comb, used twice a day. Occasionally put on the comb a little mercurial ointment, and also, as often as once a week, wash the head well with soap-suds.—The young gent meant, in giving you his card, to ask the favor of your acquaintance, and not to make a social call, as you are a stranger, and he is a stranger.

F. C. M. You ought to marry. So ought every young man of 24, having a good start in life. It is the most fatal mistake of a young man not to have married at the age or earlier. A good wife is not an expense, on the contrary, she is a helpmeet and a very dear companion.

D. L. Cloves are grown on the clove tree. The half-opened buds being gathered are smoked by a wood fire and then dried in the sun. Each clove consists of two parts of a round head, which are the four petals or leaves of the flower rolled up, inclosing a number of small stamens or filaments. The petals are of a reddish color, and are separated from the head by a narrow groove. The petals are of the unripe seed vessel. All these parts may be distinctly seen if a few cloves are soaked for a short time in hot water, when the leaves of the flower will be seen to unroll. Both the taste and the smell of cloves depend on the quantity of oil they contain. Sometimes the oil is separated from the rest of the flower, and is used for the odor and taste in cooking. It is much weakened by such unfair proceeding.

J. THOMAS. All food, "dry" (April 1st) is not a "modern superstition." Its origin is as old as the hills. It is, indeed, said to have originated in one of old Father Noah's mistakes in sending the dove forth from the ark on the first day of the month. Before the waters had subsided—that first day being April 1st, and in commemoration of his folly the day was set apart for sending simpatons on fools' errands.

ANALYSTA-POETRY. Maudy Thursday is the Thursday before Good Friday, and is the day when the disciples left the disciples left by Christ, when he commanded them all to love one another. Its Latin name was therefore *Die Mandata*—the day when the disciples were commanded to love one another. It is a day when the disciples were commanded to love one another. It is a day when the disciples were commanded to love one another.

PATSEY. Silk embroidery is greatly used on dresses this season. Green is much in favor as one of the most acceptable shades for grounds. On this variety of colors can be obtained in the most perfect manner. Black comes next as a favorite color. Head-dresses are again altered, and again the old-fashioned round wreath is fashionable. The fashion of the Russian housewife, in view, and even the simplest bands are made to assume the coronet shape.

MINERVA. A silk umbrella will cost from five to seven dollars. We are not aware of any such thing as the *fon* people delight in the new sun umbrella. Some of them are of changeable silk with the richest tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl medallies. Better handles are of richly-carved ivory, and still others are of ebony with antique carvings. These face-protectors are marked at prices that range from \$10 to \$40. Plain kinds have only chains for the handles, and can be had from \$4 to \$8; \$7 is a medium, and this price is usually paid for the lined black and brown silk ones. Later on in the season the market for umbrellas will be more active, and the market at prices that will be more popular. Lined with fancy colors they sell for from seventy-five cents to three dollars.

ALEX P. The legal rate of postage on the SATURDAY JOURNAL addressed to its regular subscribers, is 20 cents per annum, or 5 cents per quarter, payable in advance. Subscribers who receive their copies by letter-carriers will please send the annual or quarterly postage to the carriers, taking their receipts. If any higher rates are demanded, report the facts to the local postmaster.

Mrs. ELLEN R. Move faster when mixed with turpentine and applied in the usual manner, is bluer, more glossy, and more durable than when mixed with any other liquid. The turpentine prevents rust, and when put on an old rusty stove will make it look as good as new.

YOUNG HOUSEWIFE. The very appetizing *Hasty Short Cake* is made as follows: mix with a pint of flour a lump of butter the size of an egg, rub well together, add a spoonful of cream tartar in powder; powder fine one teaspoon of salt; and one cup cold water; make a stiff batter, add flour if needed. Fry in one hour or buttermilk, you do not need cream of tartar nor as much butter. It is much better made of buttermilk.

NERVOUS NELL. We would advise you to consult a physician and not ourselves, for a cure for nervousness; as we have no medicine to give you, we can only advise you to try it, for certainly it can do you no harm, and is a most pleasant and agree

THE PASSING HOUR.

BY JOHNNIE DABB.

"Tic, tick!—tic, tick!"
 "How slow the hands go round the clock."
 So sang a child, one summer day,
 Waiting for even to go and play.

"Heigh ho! Heigh ho!"
 "Oh, how weary time does go!"
 "Twas a weary sewing-girl murmuring low,
 As she bent o'er the work that went so slow."

But the long afternoon for the child soon passed,
 And the sewing-girl's labor was done at last,
 While the gray old clock "way up in the tower,
 Rang sweetly out each passing hour."

"Too fast! Too fast!"
 "Oh, how the time is slipping past!"
 "I would give my wealth for an hour of time,"
 Said a dying woman, stained with crime."

"All is past! All is past!"
 "I shall soon be home at last!"
 "Twas an aged Christian's dying bed,
 And a sacred light seemed round it shed."

The aged saint lost count of time
 While the little child heard the church-bell chime;
 And the gray old clock "way up in the tower
 Still points to the world each passing hour."

Cora Chester's Gani.
A RECEIPT FOR UGLY GIRLS.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

CORA CHESTER sat on a *le-toi-toi* in Mrs. Dr. D'Alembert's reception-room, looking at the gay throng that moved constantly to and fro, and watching particularly a slight, graceful figure that had passed her several times, leaning on Mr. Vane's arm.

A pretty girl this stranger was—the very prettiest girl, Cora thought, she had ever seen, with her dark eyes of a changeable gray, her masses of light flossy hair, that was brushed entirely off her face, that was all afire with delighted excitement.

And, beside the girl's sweet beauty, that made Cora Chester watch her with such envious attention, there was a tender devotedness in Harry Vane's manner, as he bent his head every moment toward her upturned face that drew her nearly wild with jealousy.

Poor Cora! she sat there cross, jealous, frowning, her whole heart aching because she loved Harry Vane so dearly, because she never had been able to attract him, or any one else, to her. She had very few friends—this elegantly-dressed girl, who sat all alone on the seat where her last partner—old Mr. Crozer, a married man, with a grandchild a year old, had left her. Among the gentlemen no one seemed to care for her particularly—and Harry least of all; while even the girls with whom she associated, though always polite, courteous, never offered her any of their confidences, or showed her any tokens of more than respectful acquaintance.

And—it was all because she was so ugly! Cora Chester had settled that question long ago, and angrily added another decision this night, as she glanced from Harry Vane's evident admiration to her own reflection in the opposite mirror.

She saw a rather graceful figure—a figure that would have been grace itself were it not for the conscious presence of itself manifested in every position that she took; she saw a toilette exquisitely stylish and ladylike; she saw a nervous, discontented face—nervous because of the restless, cross expression of the blue eyes—discontented because of the homely curl of the lips that she would have given any thing to have had freshly rosy, and smiling and dimpled, like the girl she admired.

She had a good mouth, too; well-formed lips, with a fine set of teeth to be displayed when she chose—but the trouble was she didn't choose. She had made up her mind that because her hair was a lusterless yellow, her complexion an opaque white, her lips a dull, bluish hue, that she was doomed to be passed by forever in the market matrimonial; and so she grew sullen, jealous, discontented, and never made the slightest effort to prove that beneath her unattractive exterior lay a warm heart, and more sensible intellect than would be supposed, judging exteriorly.

For months Cora had simply felt disgusted with the people—especially the gentlemen—who had preferred paying their *devoirs* to girls of arch smiles and winning ways and saucy glances, rather than to be entertained by those who knew themselves well informed on any current topic except gossip.

By "those," of course, Cora meant herself, and her vanity, instead of making her exert herself and outshine by means of her available forces, served to increase the distance between herself and those whom she really would have been delighted to know.

People called her "reserved," "haughty," at first, and she rather liked it for a while—until the Fates (the Furies Cora had it) brought Harry Vane to the scene of action, whom, in common with many another girl, Cora Chester saw—and loved. He was a splendid fellow—gentle, without making himself too familiar; delightfully gay and joyous without descending to the vulgarity of "loudness," dignified without being conceited, and handsome to a fault. And Cora fairly worshipped him; and then—she began to thaw out slightly. Then, for Mr. Vane's sake, she took extraordinary pains with her toilette—didn't other girls use such devices, and succeed?

So, depending upon her dress, so, always remembering just what the parting glance of her dressing-glass told her, Cora tried—and naturally failed, just as she had attempted and been unsuccessful before.

Thus she grew more and more unhappy; every day spending wasted hours before her mirror in the fruitless attempt to cultivate what she believed the only passport to the masculine heart—personal beauty; she sought refuge from her wretchedness in miserable novels, and became more and more unlovely, cynical, discontented.

Affairs had arrived at just this crisis the evening she sat in Mrs. Dr. D'Alembert's rooms, watching Harry Vane and his lovely companion with a most horrible anguish at her heart; thinking, with an ardor whose fierceness almost terrified her, that for such witching grace, such girlish abandon, such sparkling joyousness, she would give all she possessed in the world.

She sat there, a quarter of an hour probably, watching what transpired before her jealous eyes, and then, in one of her moods—one of the very impulses that had taught people to distrust her a little—she ordered her carriage and retired, after bidding an adieu to her hostess, who accepted it quietly, knowing "Miss Chester's peculiarities."

Arrived home, Cora went to her dressing-room, had her maid remove her evening attire; then, dismissing the girl, sat herself down in a low chair before the grate fire, to indulge in one of her customary reveries on the subject forever on hand.

She sat gazing into the ruby-red coal-bed, feeling delightfully comfortable, physically, and wondering how it was people were so ex-

cessively foolish as ever to imagine the glowing coals assumed forms and faces and features, and congratulating herself on her superiority over the common run of girls on this and kindred subjects, when—

Right in the very center of the fire she saw as plain as daylight, a large, roomy cave, with lofty pillars at irregular intervals, that made one of the grandest perspectives she ever had seen. Right at the arched mouth of the cavern stood a tiny, arrow-straight woman, whose twinkling eyes looked her full in the face; and then—oh! how funny it sounded!—there came a curious tiny voice, that reminded Cora of drops of water on hissing red coals.

"I am the original holder of all the receipts for beauty you ever heard of; here, in my cave-castle, all the wonderful liquors and cosmetics are manufactured; and I, and only I, of all the sprites, can give you the receipt you have wanted so long, and really need to make you happy."

Cora fairly shivered with delight.

"You can help me—to be beautiful, to win Harry Vane, to—"

"I will cause you to be fair as the sun, lovely as the lily, so that not only the lover you want shall yield to the charm, but every one else with whom you come in contact. But there is a condition."

"Oh, of course," Cora returned. "Only I hope you don't belong to that people who invariably demand a human soul as their price; because in that case we'll never come to a bargain."

The little scarlet woman chuckled—Cora thought her laugh sounded precisely like the bubbling up of some boiling liquid.

"By no means. My only price is—implicit obedience. And I'll have no promising in the dark either; I'll tell you every thing beforehand."

"Well, I'm sure that's fair. But is there no forfeit?"

"To be sure there is—if you break your word to me, I punish you by making you uglier than before. Will you buy my receipt by obedience?"

"I'll obey every order that is not opposed to my conscience," Cora said, unhesitatingly.

the new interest friends took in her as well as by the interest she experienced in them.

At first, she refused to take the exercise her little weird adviser had given; but little by little, she came to it, until, after an hour or two's good hard work, and the delightful physical effects she experienced therefrom—the naturally healthful desire for food she had so long been a stranger to—she realized that she was, indeed, turning over a new leaf for the better.

Then being occupied legitimately a greater part of her time, she appreciated her hours of recreation to the full; then, depending on herself for her attractions, she insensibly made friends of the very people she had despised for their want of penetration. At first, she noticed that Harry Vane seemed to regard her with silent curiosity; then, when she would catch his eye and wonder if he ever *could* fulfill her scarlet woman's prophecy, and a conscious flush would surge over her face, and she saw Harry's admiring glance, why—Wasn't her rule working?

Wasn't the dream-sprite a sensible little fairy, after all?

Was it not healthful exercise that sent her blood bounding along her veins in such exuberant vitality; occupation that made her appreciate the time of recreation, of amusement?

Was it not obedience to Nature's own laws in regard to the time and quality of eating and drinking that was the cosmetic that chased away her dull, lifeless complexion, her heavy-expressed looks, her listless, despondent feeling? And, above all, when Harry Vane kissed his blushing bride, and called her so fair to see, —was it not the principle involved in the basement of those vanity-traps from her presence, that made her less conscious of her personal appearance—I do not say less *careful*, mind you—and thereby actually compelling her to depend upon her power of pleasing, rather than the passive acceptance of *only* what is due the outward appearance?

There is a lesson in this sketch, half-explained. Will another Cora Chester take the hint, and like her, gain true beauty and real worth, beside which a mere pretty face, or faultless make-up, is as dross to refined gold?



"I cannot sleep or rest until Nydia is found."

NYDIA,
THE
Beautiful Sleep-Walker.

CHAPTER XI.

LOST.

It was a strange evening, that spent at Drury Lane Theater by the two nieces of Lord Wyndlow.

An evening to be remembered with a feeling of supernatural terror by at least one of them. "Macbeth" was the play they had come to see, and Nydia was conscious, though she could assign no reason for it, that her three companions turned and looked at her with a singular expression of countenance when Lady Macbeth came on the stage walking in her sleep.

She was also slightly annoyed by the fixed manner in which Mr. Wade seemed to stare at and keep his eyes upon her.

But this passed away; a singular feeling of drowsiness came upon her, and she slept. Asleep in a theater, you say.

But, though singularly dull, and making no answer to any comment, not repeated by Wade, she seemed, to the eyes of Cora and Pelham, to be awake, though too languid and unwell to take any interest in the tragedy.

A few minutes after this change had come over her, the curtain fell, and Cora rose to go, observing that they must not remain out late, now their uncle and aunt were away from home. "Very well," returned Wade, courteously. "Take my arm, Miss Nydia; there will be sure to be a crush."

With a shiver, like one doing something against her will, and yet unable to resist the power which held her, the girl obeyed; and Cora, far from pleased at being thus handed over to Pelham, gathered up her skirts, and walked on before them.

Unnoticed by them, a pair of eyes had been fixed upon this small party in the private box all the evening.

Not the eyes of Folly, though he had paid quite as much attention to the occupants of this particular box as to the actors on the stage.

But the eyes of the man sitting opposite to and so intensely watching them were singular, with a half-dreamy though intense magnetic power in them, which irresistibly attracted the attention of any one who had once looked at him to repeat the glance.

But he is evidently rather shunning than courting attention, for he keeps hidden behind the curtain of the box in which he sits, never

once coming forward into the light, and it is only when Cora rises to leave the theater, as I have described, that he, too, rose to his feet, threw a heavy cloak over his shoulders, and, pulling a broad-brimmed felt hat over his head, so that it helped to hide, if it did not disguise, his features, joined the crowd that was pouring out toward the street.

For the theater was crowded this evening, and the fog, which had not properly cleared off for the whole day, had come on thickly enough at night, making the very lamps and link-boys look pale and weird in the densely dark atmosphere.

The crowd of people leaving the theater, anxious to get safely home, and the very few carriages and cabs which were at hand or could be obtained to take them, naturally made a great crush, and, among other things, Lord Wyndlow's carriage was missing.

Intentionally or otherwise, the party got separated, Pelham pushing forward with Cora; and when at length the carriage was found, and Miss Legrange was placed in it, both Wade and Nydia were missing.

"I expect Wade got hold of a cab, and, being tired of waiting, and not seeing us in this fog, took your cousin home in it," said Pelham. "In any case, it is useless our remaining here any longer. We shall most likely find them at home when we get there."

But Cora was dissatisfied and anxious.

Had Wade been her companion, it might have been different, and her anxiety on account of Nydia might for a time, at least, have been lulled to sleep.

As it was, she entreated Pelham to look among the crowd for them, positively refusing to go back without them.

As far as looking for the missing ones went, Pelham obeyed her.

But finding them was another matter; and, against her will, Cora was about to consent to go home, and see if they had preceded them, when Folly, the butler, edged his way through the crowd, and came up to them.

"You here?" exclaimed Cora, who caught sight of and instantly recognized him.

"Yes, Miss; I've been to see the play. Can I do any thing, Miss?"

"Yes, Miss; I've been to see the play. Can I do any thing, Miss?"

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They have missed us in the crowd and fog; a very easy thing to do, and either lost their way or have met with some accident on their way home."

"Oh, dear! I hope it is nothing serious. Poor Nydia! If any thing happens to her, my uncle will never forgive me."

And Cora began to wring her hands helplessly. "Don't agitate yourself, Miss Legrange. They may be here directly. If you will be advised by me, you will wrap a warm shawl round your shoulders, and take a glass of wine or negus after coming out of the fog. I will take something of the kind, too; and then, if the trunks have not returned, will start to search for them."

So the wine and boiling-water was brought, the fire piled up afresh; and Cora, too restless and excited to sit still, wandered about the room like one demented.

"Well, they have not come. That butler of yours that we left to look after them will no doubt soon be here, and then I must start; but I think, Miss Legrange, it will be the safest and wisest course to assume that they have met with an accident, and are thus delayed."

Cora looked at him, read the thought in his mind; and while her own cheek became still paler as she admitted the idea which his words would seem to hide, she bent her head, observing:

"Yes, you are right; it must be an accident."

The return of Folly, with the report that he had been able to learn nothing of the missing lady and gentleman, decided Pelham to start at once upon what seemed at best but a hopeless search.

Say what they would to each other, neither Cora nor Pelham could believe that Wade was not detaining Nydia against her will, nor that any accident of sufficient importance to keep them away from home, had he desired to reach it, had occurred.

No; he had duped Cora, made a cat's-paw of Pelham, and outraged every sentiment of manhood and honor.

Such was the conclusion they arrived at, though they did not give the thought utterance, and the clock on the mantel-piece striking one, warned them that time was passing, and whatever they did, or attempted to do, should be commenced at once.

"I will say good-by for the present," observed Pelham, shaking Cora by the hand. "If I were you, Miss Legrange, I would go to bed, or, at least, lie down and try to sleep. You may depend upon my having you aroused the moment I have any news for you."

But Cora shook her head impatiently.

"No," she said, as she threw herself on the couch, sobbing. "I can not sleep or rest until Nydia is found. It is all my fault. I ought never to have gone to the theater. What will my uncle say? Oh, Nydia!"

In this condition Pelham left her, and hurried from the room.

As he descended the stairs to leave the house, he was met by Folly, who asked permission to accompany him.

"Yes; I shall be glad of your company," was the reply.

And thus the two went out into the fog to search for the treasure which had been either lost or stolen.

There were no cabs to be got, no train or other mode of conveyance, and Pelham felt that the long walk they would have to take was simply so much strength and energy thrown away.

Still, they could not sit down doing nothing, with this dread uncertainty as to Nydia's fate, and they started off at a good pace for Tavistock Square, where Wade occupied chambers.

It was past two o'clock when they paused before the house they sought, and were surprised, agreeably surprised, to see lights in the room of the man they sought.

"He is at home; there has been an accident," exclaimed Pelham, in a glad tone of relief.

"There's something up, at any rate," replied Folly, in a somewhat less sanguine manner.

Two or three times they knocked and rung without response, until Pelham suddenly remembered that his own latch key had often opened this door before, and, simultaneously with the thought, he used it.

They were inside the house now, walking unannounced up the stairs, and had reached the first landing, when the door of Mr. Wade's sitting-room was thrown open, and the landlady of the house, with her husband, a surgeon and a servant, stood before them.

looked at each other, doubt and distrust in the eyes of both.

"Pelham was the first to speak."

"Where is Nydia Claxton?" he asked.

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Then who should know?" Her uncle will be here to-morrow to demand her at your hands."

"I tell you I do not know. I am as anxious as you can be."

"I was crossing the road, with her on my arm, when I received a violent blow on the head, and before I had recovered, I was on the ground and some cab or cart had passed over me."

"I just retained sufficient consciousness to give this address and insist upon being brought home here."

"I knew that my leg was broken; and then I fainted."

"When I recovered, I felt sure that Nydia had got home safely, and I should have sent to inquire directly I could have done so."

"But what took you across the street? You know the carriage would come up to the steps of the theatre, and in the fog, it was madness to take a lady through the streets."

"True; so it seemed; but we were tired of waiting for the carriage, and were going to take a cab. Oh, this cursed leg of mine! If I could only walk as I used to do, I would soon find her."

"If she is to be found, I will find her," replied Pelham, sternly; "but where shall I begin my search?"

"I don't know; she must have gone home," Wade gasped out.

"And then he fainted, and the surgeon and his assistant, coming in at Pelham's call, almost turned him out of the sick room."

"I leave you here to nurse Mr. Wade and learn all you can," said Pelham to Folly, as he prepared to leave the house.

"I am going back to Eccleston Square, to see if Miss Nydia has returned; if not, I shall be here early in the morning. In any case, you are on guard till I return."

"Yes, sir," was the reply; "you may trust me."

"And Folly prepared to make himself comfortable on the couch in the sitting-room, rather with the air and manner of a sheriff's officer in possession than of any one left to nurse an invalid."

"When Pelham got back to Eccleston Square, he found Cora and the servants all sitting up, pale and hollow-eyed, waiting for him; but Nydia had not returned."

"Doubt seemed to be exchanged for certainty. If a strong man like Wade had only escaped with broken bones, was there even a chance that Nydia's life had been preserved?"

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE OR DEATH.

"Oh, doctor, can he live? Is there hope?"

"Where there is life, there is hope, madam."

"And that is all you can tell me?" asked Myra Claxton, as she gazed with tearless eyes and a sad, white, woe-begone face, at the man of science, from whom she was trying to extract a decision in favor of the recovery of his patient.

"Yes; to say more would be to buoy you up with false hopes. There is a chance, and the chances are in consequence of his good constitution, in his favor, but that is all; a few hours, however, will decide the question."

A few hours.

The hopes, joys, desires, ambition of a life all hanging thus upon the events of a few hours, and if the angel of death brought the answer, then would the object of her own life be ended.

So she thought as she paced the room alone, when the doctor had left her, the years of her life seeming to come back like so many pictures in a dissolving view, one succeeding the other, until they left her here, her happiness hanging by the finest thread, on a man's uncertain, fleeting life.

Glancing into the next room from that in which Lord Wyndlow's sister is so restlessly pacing, the cause of her grief and anxiety may be seen.

A man lies on a bed, so ill that one is almost inclined to wonder if life still animates him and if he still breathes.

His eyes are closed, and he sleeps the sleep from which he shall awake to life or death.

Lying there, you might judge him to be a man of about forty years of age, perhaps even less, the broad, high forehead, clearly-cut nose, and long flowing mustache and beard, giving one the impression of power and strength as well as beauty.

What his eyes may be like you can not see now, for they are closed, and the drawn, pinched expression of his face, added to his alarming pallor, gives the impression that you are looking upon the dead rather than the living.

There are two persons in the room with him, Lord Wyndlow and his confidential servant, Moxen.

Assured that the patient slept, the former rose and was about to leave the room when his servant was entering it.

"Better come with me," he whispered in a low tone. "Moxen will call us at the least change."

But she only shook her head, and went to her seat at the bedside. If might be her last watch by the side of the man who was to have been her husband, and she would not resign the duty to another.

A sad story had been that of Rupert Lane and Myra Claxton; sad because of the gloomy termination which seemed to await it after such long weary years of waiting.

It had been the old story, old almost as the everlasting hills, and yet new and fresh with all the bitterness and all the rapture which comes to every human heart, as though none before had felt like it.

Twenty years ago this very day, and Myra Claxton, then a girl of sixteen, listened to the words of love which Rupert Lane, then an undergraduate of twenty, poured into her ear.

Listened, believed and loved with a constancy, which time and absence and change, the devotion of others, did the opposition of friends, had all failed to shake.

There are some natures which love but once, whose life long happiness or misery is cast upon the hazard of one die; happily for themselves they are rare; but Myra Claxton was one of them.

The storm of indignation which followed the avowal of their love to Myra's father—then Lord Wyndlow—clouded at once the happiness which in their simplicity had seemed so perfect.

For Rupert Lane, though the son of a gentleman, was poor, an orphan, and almost friendless.

True, the uncle who paid for his education was rich, but this would be no advantage to Rupert, since, beyond educating him as a gentleman, and procuring him an appointment, or giving him a start in life, he had made his nephew distinctly understand that nothing was to be expected from him.

But, whenever did youth, joined to ability, doubt being able to carve his own fortune and to win his own spurs in the field of life?

Rupert Lane was ambitious and sanguine, feeling that Myra's love would inspire him to achieve any thing.

I told you it was an old, old story, the story of love and constancy against the world.

There were many stormy scenes between Lord Wyndlow and his youngest daughter, scenes in which temperate language, on one side at least, were scarcely regarded.

Her father stormed, her mother entreated, and her three brothers and sister reasoned, expostulated, or ridiculed her, but all in vain; she would not promise to give up Rupert; and irritated at her obstinacy, fearing perhaps that she would elude their vigilance and take some step that could not be recalled, they hurried her one day, without notice, or even knowing where she was going, off to Germany, thus managing to cut off all communication with her lover.

Her father's influence also had been brought to bear upon Rupert's uncle, who, partly in anger and irritation at one of his family being considered an unfit match for one of the Wyndlows, and partly out of a prudent regard for the young man himself, procured him an appointment, and not without difficulty sent him off to India.

Myra was taken away, and Rupert went, if not quite of his own free will, yet so buoyed up with hopes of the future, and so beset with argument and a succession of circumstances that were all hurrying him forward, that it was impossible, of well-nigh so, to resist them.

But misfortune dogged and followed him like his shadow.

A fatality seemed to cling to him. He was not always unsuccessful, but he could never get back to England.

Ten years thus passed away; he was thirty. Myra was twenty-six, and he was making great progress, was indeed a rich man, and looking forward eagerly to his return, when the news reached him, apparently from a reliable source, that the woman he loved was married to another.

A severe illness set in, and when he recovered from it, a restless aversion to everything he had known, seen, or loved before, came over him.

He had made his arrangements for leaving India for England, and he went away now, only his object and destination being changed.

For years he traveled, and wandered over Asia, living for a time with the wild tribes whom he came in contact with, seeming indeed as though he intended to become one of them, and then the old restlessness would assert its sway, and he was off again, a wanderer upon the earth.

Eight or nine years had thus passed, and Rupert Lane was at Pekin, with a longing desire to see once more the land of his birth, or some human countenance which was associated with his youth, when he met, purely by accident it seemed, one of the men who had been among his college friends at Oxford.

They spent the evening together, and from Taplow, the friend in question, Rupert Lane learnt what made his heart beat and swell, and seem too large for the space nature allotted it.

For Taplow had just come out from England, and almost the last person he had talked with in London was Frank Claxton, who was then about to start for Canada, taking the news of his uncle's death to the brother who was to succeed him.

Thus Taplow could tell Lane all about the Claxtons, and assure him that the Myra Claxton, whom he had parted with some nineteen years before, was Myra Claxton still.

"But I heard she was married," he said, incredulously; "heard it for a positive fact."

"I can't answer for what you heard; I can only tell you the present state of the case. They are an obstinate race, those Claxtons, and I believe by way of punishing her for not marrying some man whom he had selected for her husband, her amiable father left her, as far as he could do so, penniless. I know there was a regular break-up of the family when he died, and Joseph—that was the second son—went off to Canada, taking his sister with him."

"Then she is not married; she is waiting for me, my own true love. I ought to have known it. I ought not to have doubted, but thank God I never blamed her. I always believed her true in heart to me, even while they had forced her to marry another. Myra, my own!"

And forgetful of the presence of his friend, forgetful of everything but the deep, intense love which had never left him for twenty years, which had become a part of his very being, and now sprung up, reanimated by the torch of hope, into a perfect blaze of adoring love, he began to pace about the room, his hair pushed wildly from his forehead, his brain and heart throbbing and scarcely able to bear the rush of hope and ecstasy that had so suddenly come upon him.

"I shall go to England at once, without further delay; but you said she was in Canada. No matter; wherever she is, now that I know she is true to me, I will find her."

"Stop; don't get excited, Lane," remonstrated his calmer friend. "By this time the Claxtons will be in England. Wyndlow Abbey will be the best place to direct a letter to, and of course you would not go back without writing to announce your intention of returning; the shock may be greater to her than it is now to you."

"Thanks, you are right; I seem to have taken leave of my senses. The mail starts at midnight, doesn't it? I shall just be in time to write a few lines; you will excuse me, I know," and so saying he sat down to write that letter which Myra Claxton hid so rapturously in her bosom, when Nydia came to suggest that a visit to London would be a nice change and do them all good.

This had been the cause of Myra Claxton's restless anxiety, which every one around her had noticed without divining the cause, for the letter had said that the writer would be in London about the twentieth of January, and February had come to an end without his making his appearance.

Twenty long years of waiting would make the pulse less boisterous, one would think, and render a few days, more or less, of no account; but far from it, all the feelings and passions of her heart had been intensified, and the love of the girl of sixteen was but as the rivulet to the rushing mountain torrent in the woman of six and thirty.

Myra Claxton was still a beautiful woman. At length the telegram came to tell her that the one she loved and waited for so long was ill, perhaps dying, and that if she would see him alive, she must hasten to Portsmouth at once.

Who shall describe the meeting of the lovers, so long divided—so sadly brought together again?

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 211.)

"Ah, Sam, so you've been in trouble, eh?"

"Yes, Jem." "Well, cheer up, man; adversity tries us, and shows up our better qualities."

"Ah, but adversity didn't try me; it was a solemn old judge, and he showed up my worse qualities."

The Detective's Story.

BY HENRI MONTCALEM.

I AM about to relate—began the detective police-officer—my first professional experience. Perhaps, however, I should call it an amateur rather than professional experience, for I was not then a member of the force, and took hold of the case merely because it had interested me deeply. It was my success in this case and the reputation it gave me that afterward decided me in the choice of our really glorious profession.

One evening the papers were full of a horrible murder, committed up town the night before. The parties concerned were first-class people, and of course the affair made quite a stir. The circumstances, as briefly as I can state them, were as follows:

Michael Howe, the murdered man, was a wealthy merchant, fifty years old, or thereabouts. His nearest relative was a beautiful niece, Miss Ellen Howe, who lived with him, and would, it was understood, inherit his property. People acquainted with the family were aware that Mr. Howe was of a narrow and tyrannical disposition, and though he loved the girl well and spared no expense to gratify her, yet was often very harsh and cruel to her. Ellen was not only dependent upon her uncle for support, but she had, it seems, contrary to his expressed wishes, engaged herself to a young bank clerk as poor as herself.

This young man, Ellis by name, was really a very fine fellow, with an unspotted reputation. Old Howe had in years past, had business relations with Ellis's father, and had, it was said, been the cause of his ruin and suicide.

However this may have been, it was certain that Michael Howe entertained feelings of the most violent hatred toward the young man himself, and had repeatedly and in the most abusive language forbidden his holding any communication with Miss Howe. Ellis, on his part, cordially detested the uncle; but he loved the niece, and determined to marry her, in spite of all her father and upon the night of the murder he had come to tell him so.

The interview between Michael Howe and Frederic Ellis no human eye had witnessed. All that was known of it was gathered from the account given by the young man himself. Strange to say, this account, though it positively denied all knowledge of the murder, was fatally damaging to the young man's case. He had, he said, called on Mr. Howe about ten o'clock in the evening. At first he was refused admittance; but as he was turning away, the merchant himself came out of the library and told him to come in, saying that he might as well have it out then as any other time. They went into the library, and as the servant also testified, the key was turned and the two remained together until everybody else in the house had retired. The only additional testimony given by the servant was that in going around a short while after to fasten up the house, she had heard loud tones in the library and had paused at the door to listen. The words she caught were few. She had heard the younger man stop in his walk up and down the room, and say, excitedly: "By Heaven, you lie, sir! My father never did that; and were you not an old man and Ellen's uncle I would kill you this instant for saying so." Then she had heard the old man get up from his chair and move toward the door, and she had hurried away up stairs.

Ellis acknowledged the words and a great many more quite as violent. He had been with the old man an hour, he said. He had at once announced his determination to marry Ellen Howe at all hazards, but he once more asked permission to do so. Mr. Howe laughed at him, calling him names he did not care to repeat, and finally taunted him with the crime and disgraceful death of his father. Then the young man, stung almost to madness, had used the words testified to by the servant. The old man had gone to the door, but only to see that it was secure. He did not seem to have any fear for himself; but still went on with his taunts. Finally he had said: "Young man, have had words enough. I worked your father's ruin—yes, and drove him to his disgraceful death, and I glory in it. But that is not all. I hate you as I hated him, and I will work your ruin, too. You shall not hang yourself—oh, no; but the sheriff shall do it for you. I shall see you hanged—see you with these eyes—I and thousands of others shall see Frederic Ellis, son of the renowned forger, Gerald Ellis, hung by the neck until he is dead. Yes, I shall see it, sir, I shall see it; and maybe your father, the man that robbed me of my love years ago, will look down and enjoy the sight with me."

Fairly beside himself at this horrible abuse, young Ellis (still telling the story himself) had drawn his revolver, started forward, and fired. The ball had grazed the old man's temple, making a slight flesh wound only. Ellis had cocked the weapon again, when suddenly a better impulse seized him, and he laid it on the table. "For God's sake, Mr. Howe," he had said, "take this yourself or I shall be a murderer," and then had hurried out, still fearful of his self-control. After this he remembered talking up and down the pavement for a long while, and finally, at what hour he knew not, going home to his boarding-house.

So much for the young man's evidence, given voluntarily after he had heard of the murder, and with an air that a guilty man could hardly have assumed. When asked why he persisted in giving an account so damaging to himself, he said that he could not speak again but the truth, even if it brought him to the gallows.

The old man had been missed early the next morning. Blood-stains were found all about the library, and a peculiar smell filled the room, though the servant found the windows wide open. The fire in the grate had gone out, but there were traces about it of burned clothing recognized as that formerly worn by the deceased. Also a ring of his, only partially melted, was found in the ashes. Still more thorough search revealed the charred remnants of a human skeleton at the bottom of a well a short distance from the library window.

In short, Michael Howe had evidently been murdered, and a terrible chain of circumstantial evidence connected Frederic Ellis with the deed. It was not then a day of long trials and evasions of the law. The accused was tried at once, convicted almost without a plea in his own defense—for he could urge nothing but his previous good character—and sentenced to be hung in one month's time.

Now comes my connection with the story. I first saw the prisoner in court on the day of his conviction, and I was strangely drawn to him by his fearless bearing under such fearful circumstances, and the sorrowful yet unflinching manner in which he received his sentence. When asked if he had any thing to say why he should not die, he repeated:

"Only this, that I am but one more of the many victims of circumstantial evidence."

I was young then, and believed in human nature. I said to myself as I left the court-room, "No one can convince me that that man is a murderer."

That night I got together all the printed accounts of the trial, and went carefully over

every atom of the testimony. It was all reliable, and seemed to absolutely prove Ellis guilty. Yet I felt positively certain that he was innocent. I could have wagered my life that he was the soul of truth and honor. Yet if he was that, his own testimony was true, and that was the most damaging of all. One sentence of the murdered man struck me as peculiar: "Mark my words, young man, I shall see you hanged." Strange prophecy! Could the old man have had some presentiment that Frederic Ellis would so soon be sentenced to the gallows? But he had said, too, *I shall see it with these eyes*. And Michael Howe was a man of his word, after all. Did he mean he would look down with his evil eyes and view the transaction from the other world? A new thought struck me. Might there not be some hidden meaning in his words? Half-true they were certainly likely to be. Might they not prove wholly so? Was it positively certain that a murder had been committed? Was Mr. Howe beyond all doubt passed from the land of the living? I did not believe it!

The next day I called upon Miss Howe. She was in deep black and quite broken down with grief. I explained as well as I could my suspicions and theory as to the murder, and she blessed me for the hope I brought her. She was rich, but her lover must be saved if it took all. No expense must be spared; all was in my hands. I left her with a firm determination to prove Frederic Ellis innocent in spite of fate. It was of no use to fight the evidence. I went through it all once more, examined the premises, the ring, the charred bones; but they told no other story. If there had been a murder, Frederic Ellis was the guilty man. If he was innocent, Mr. Howe was alive. I must find him if I would save the prisoner; and I must find him within a month.

But how? I had no clue whatever to his whereabouts. If he had gone away, he had left no trace. I spared no expense; I sent trusty men in every direction, on all the railroads, to every part of the United States. I even dispatched a messenger to Liverpool; though for reasons of my own I did not believe Michael Howe had left the country. I advertised for information concerning a man of his description. I worked night and day myself. Alas! All of no avail. Day trod upon the heel of day, the second week followed the first, the third the second, and now it was the first of March and Ellis was to be hung on the third. Miss Howe was despondent though. But I, though I had now given up all hope of finding my man in his place of hiding, still indulged in one forlorn hope which I had communicated to no one. He had said: "I will see you hanging with my own eyes," and Michael Howe was notoriously a man of his word. His sole passion was revenge, and thus far his scheme had been perfect. I was mistaken in the man, or he would be present to taste the sweets of that revenge to the last. He would be in town on the third of March, and I should meet him at the gallows. The more I thought of it the more sanguine I became.

At nine o'clock on the morning of the second, almost exactly twenty-four hours before the time appointed for the execution, I received a telegram which very much raised my hopes. It was dated at B—, and was from Snow, the most skillful detective in my employ. It read simply thus:

"I think I have my man. He is moving your way. Watch every train from here."

I took out no warrant, told no man of my plans; but I was present at the arrival of every train and narrowly observed every passenger. No reward crowned my efforts however, until the eight A. M. train on the third. I saw Snow get off the car. I caught his eye as he stepped to the platform, but he put his fingers on his lips and sauntered across to where a decrepit old lady, whose white hair contrasted strongly with the deep black she wore, was being assisted into a carriage. Her face was covered from sight by a thick veil. Snow lingered long enough to hear the direction she gave the driver; then, driven off, he came over to where I was waiting.

"Well, Snow," I said, anxiously, "how is it?"

"That's the party," and he jerked his thumb over his shoulder toward the departing carriage.

"What, the old woman in black?"

"Eggsactly."

I looked at him in astonishment. Then, as I began to understand, I was seized with a sudden terror lest the man should escape.

"But he will slip through our fingers after all," I cried.

"No fear of that, sir. He's going straight to the jail. I saw him pull out a pass to the execution and read it over last night on the train; and I just heard him direct the hackman to drive to — street."

I held out my hand.

"Snow, you're a brick!"

"Oh, I've done my part, sir. But, after all, I was only the legs and did the running about. You were the head and managed the brainwork. It was the prettiest piece of calculating I ever saw, your reckoning he would happen round to see the hanging. You'd be an honor to the force, sir."

We took a hack and drove to the prison yard. I was of course provided with a pass, and we entered. Most of those who had a right to be there were already present, and among them the woman in black.

The prisoner would be led forth from his cell in a few moments now. He was already bidding Miss Howe farewell. She, it is hardly necessary to say, still believed firmly in his innocence. Should we wait until the final moment? It would be much more sensational, but hardly as human. No, we would end the terrible tragedy at once.

"Snow," I whispered, "you are sure of your man?"

"Just as sure as I am of myself!"

"Then arrest him."

Snow stepped forward and placed his hand on the supposed woman's shoulders. She started.

"Michael Howe, you are my prisoner!"

The old man sprung up, and would have gained the door, but I was upon the watch and held him fast while Snow placed the irons on his hands. In the struggle the thick veil was torn aside, revealing the closely-shaven features of Michael Howe; and here on his right temple was a blood-red furrow made by the passage of Ellis's ball on that eventful night.

To describe the wonder of the crowd and of the city, or the wild happiness of Miss Howe and the joy of the condemned man at this sudden denouement, is as needless as it is impossible. The story of course ends here.

Old Howe was committed at once, but escaped the law by hanging himself to a window bar. His scheme of vengeance had been perfect, indeed; but he carried it a little too far. He died without a will, and the young people were married at once, and have long been enjoying his wealth. Snow made a good thing of it, and they have naturally looked upon me as a friend of the family ever since. I was so tickled at my success that I concluded to try the detective profession for a living, and I've been moderately successful at it ever since, though never more so than in my first case.

The Vigilance Committee.

BY W. POLYBLANK PARKER.

IN a Christian and civilized land there can be but one opinion in regard to the question of Lynch Law, or of the efficacy of those self-constituted tribunals styled Vigilance Committees.

We all agree on general principles that no unauthorized body of persons have the right, either legally or morally, to sit in judgment on their fellow-beings without due process of law.

Public opinion is almost unanimous against summary trial and punishment of crime, because there is no safety for the citizen, and no assurance of liberty under mob rule.

Peace and freedom exist only under the protection of law and order.

But it will be said there are localities wherein the absence of proper legal redress for sudden and violent crimes, which call for prompt action, naturally throw the duty of judgment on the local citizens, when, perhaps, the delay necessary to authority and jurisdiction, would enable the criminals to evade justice.

But under all circumstances, reason must condemn the existence and operation of Lynch Law.

A few years back, at the period of which we write, these Vigilance Committees existed in the Montana gold regions, and assumed almost undisputed control of such affairs as lie generally within the jurisdiction of courts of law, and were tolerated by the miners.

First, because they were the only effective means at hand to punish or check the depredations of those lawless desperadoes who infested the golden districts—only a handful of law.

Second, as a body of men under peculiar circumstances, wresting fortune from the bowels of Mother Earth, banished from their friends under extreme toil and danger, they very naturally entertained a bitter spirit of vengeance against the idle renegades who sought to rob them of their dearly-won treasure.

We will not attempt to defend the miners' Vigilance Committees, but if ever there existed a reasonable excuse for Lynch Law, it was at the Montana gold regions at the time of which we speak.

The locality was called Red Gulch.

An encampment had been pitched right on the river bank. The miners camped here and merely made a temporary bivouac for the purpose of prospecting.

It was a beautiful summer's evening.

The men having thrown up work for the day, were idly reclining round about their several tents smoking, chatting and singing, a brave, generous, manly set of red-shirts.

Seated on a camp-stool near the river's edge was a young man of perhaps twenty-eight or thirty.

He was evidently lost in thought; and did not heed the jests and laughter of his companions.

This young man was Max Mixer.

Driven to desperation on the night of a robbery in New York five years before, by detection and disgrace in the eyes of her he valued more than life, his mind wandered, his heart condemned him; he fled from the scene; from his home; from his friends; whether he scarcely knew, but anywhere he decided if only into banishment or oblivion.

As he was flying from the city he met an old colored waiter, whom he had long known, named Blackberry. Here was a friend indeed; with a black skin it was true, but with a white heart. The waiter was idle. Max made a confidante of him, and took him to the West.

They never parted till they reached the gold regions of Montana.

Here, on the evening of which we write, Max sat thinking of the bitter past and prospective future.

Blackberry was engaged in cooking supper; as full of wit and spirit as ever, only a little homesick.

A steamer had been daily expected up the river. Everybody was anxious and hopeful.

Dave Dye, a whole-souled, warm-hearted miner, had just been cracking a number of jokes with Blackberry.

"Blackberry, you rascal, what's for breakfast in the morning?" inquired Dye.

"Well, sah, de same likewise as dis mornin'."

life, for it brings news of loved ones left behind. Welcome to the steamer."

"Ay, ay, welcome to the steamer," shouted the miners.

The boat drew up, ran her bow ashore, and tied up.

She was instantly boarded by the impatient gold-seekers, after news. The principal attraction was the clerk with the mail-bag. He was seized upon as common prey, and quickly relieved of his burden of letters. Then came the little scenes of joy, or sorrow, as good or ill fell to the lot of one or the other—smiling faces, or hearts of woe.

Blackberry started to fill his task by filling the black bottles.

He chuckled to himself:

"Hurrah for hurrah! Whar dat black bottle? Let me aboard dat boat. I've got some freight aboard—sky-high—sky-hoo."

The light-hearted darkey stepped on board the boat.

Max gazed on the scene with a sinking heart.

"Look how the poor fellows, with moistened eyes and trembling fingers, con the precious lines from absent dear ones. None such for me—and why? The echo of guilt alone answers me. Must this last to the end of my days? No! I'm resolved it shall not. Five years have passed since that night of crime, and I feel an aged man. I will make restitution. Fortune has smiled upon me; the gold to fulfill my purpose is now mine."

He turned abruptly to Dye, and asked:

"Dye, when does this boat return?"

"To-morrow," replied Dye; "but why, Max?"

He received no answer.

Max continued his meditation.

"To-morrow. My mind is determined—I will be one of her passengers. Let me act upon this idea. I will take my departure."

He went to his tent, packed up his traps, and crossed over the gulch to bid good-by to some of his old friends.

About this time two ill-looking men, who had the stamp of river-blackies, left the boat, and going over to where Dye stood quietly smoking, one of them, addressed by his companion as Jules, accosted him.

"Stranger, how are you in the habit of killing time, eh?"

"Oh, we sometimes smoke and chat, and after play a game or two quietly," answered Jules, eying the fellow narrowly.

"A game or two?—yes, of cards, you mean? Well, now, that's just like us up here."

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know what I'll do. Some one's coming; I'll just lie down, and nary a word—hush."

Blackberry lay down again, and, trembling with fear, watched the approaching party.

They were a number of miners, coming from a distant part of the encampment, having come to the river on a visit to the steamer.

A merry and free-spirited party.

"Come, comrades, aboard the boat, and have a merry time," exclaimed one; "tis seldom our luck to get the chance."

"Ay, ay," responded the others; "now for a jovial time."

In passing to the boat it was necessary for them to cross the ground where the body of poor Dye lay, a ghastly spectacle.

One of them stumbled over the corpse. With an exclamation of terror he started back.

The next moment, however, he recovered himself, and quickly raised the body.

"As I live, a wounded man," he exclaimed.

One of the others placed his hand over Dye's head and instantly responded:

"A murdered man—he is dead."

They rushed for a lantern.

Another found the knife with which Knobby's hand had been pinioned.

"See this knife covered with blood," he cried; "tis Dye's, I know it well."

And then he added, with horror, as he recognized the face: "Ay, 'tis poor Dye himself."

"Poor fellow," said the miners.

"A quarrel, or I'm mistaken," suggested the one who had spoken first.

His foot struck something on the ground, and he raised it.

"What's this?"

It was a pickaxe. They eagerly examined it.

"Max Mixer's pick, and blood on the point," they held it to the light.

"See, here are his initials. Look at the blood on the point—gore and hair! and that ugly gash in poor Dye's head—the edge of this made that wound, or I'm a fool."

There was a general exclamation of horror.

The man who appeared to be the leader of the party now spoke out, boldly:

"The bloodthirsty villain, who would have thought it of him? But don't let us stand idle here. We can do the dead no good—we may punish the living."

"Revenge!" they shouted in unison.

The leader continued:

"Give the alarm—call for help, and scour the canons for the murderer."

"Call the Vigilance Committee," added another.

There was a general call at once.

"This way, everybody."

In a few moments a large and intensely excited crowd had assembled.

"Look, comrades, at our friend," cried the leader, "stiff in death—murdered in cold blood."

"Murdered?—by whom?" questioned the new-comers.

"By one we always thought a man, but who has proved to be a wild beast—Max Mixer."

"Max Mixer?"

"None other. The proof is plain. His ax covered with blood. Marks of a scuffle. The wound on Dye's skull."

They crowded around the spot with open expressions of rage. A volcano of wrath, which only needed a breath to fan into bursting fury.

"Where is he?—lynch him!" they yelled.

"Hanging is too good!—skin him alive!—burn him!"

The leader again commanded their attention.

"Keep cool, men," he said. "Let us proceed by regular means and find the man first."

As this was a sensible remark, it had the desired effect on the enraged group.

They demanded that he should instantly direct their proceedings.

The first thing to do was to search Max's tent.

Several rushed to the door and tore away the fastening.

The tent was vacant.

"He is not here," they shouted; "but look, every thing is packed up ready for a run—this confirms his guilt."

"The coward!" they yelled; "the dog—the wolf—burn him alive!"

Blackberry crouched among the leaves and branches, all of a shiver and cowed to silence.

"Scatter, men, in all directions," commanded the leader. "Only catch him—dead or alive."

"After him—Max Mixer, dead or alive," repeated the whole party.

It was now dusk.

The steamer's lights were lit, and the cabin's many colored windows threw a brilliant flood over the adjoining bank and the crowd of enraged gold-hunters; who sought not gold now, but thirsted for the blood of a comrade.

At this instant—perhaps the most dangerous—a man's form—a new-comer—appeared on the scene.

It was Max himself.

He saw that some terrible cause of excitement agitated the camp. He heard his own name called with angry emphasis.

"Who wants Max Mixer?" he demanded.

They recognized him, and rushed in a body to take his life.

"Lynch him—hang him!" they roared.

The leader again interposed.

His strong voice was heard high above the shouts and noise.

"Hold—not so fast. Give him breath—let him speak."

Max stared in dismay.

So completely had this unexpected scene clouded his usual presence of mind, that for an instant he was speechless.

"Friends, I know not what this all means. How have I offended you?"

The leader replied:

"How have you offended your Creator, Max Mixer—look on the dead and ask."

They pointed to the corpse.

Max walked quickly up and gazed into the face.

With a cry of anguish, he threw himself on the body.

"Merciful Heaven, what do I see. Dear old friend Dye stark in death. Explain."

They feebly yelled:

"Hypocrite—rather you explain."

"I?"

"Ay, you, and quickly."

Max rose and indignantly faced them.

"You do not suspect me?" he said.

"We do—we know your guilt. Do not deny it. How came your pick clotted with blood?"

"It is yours," responded the leader.

The accused looked at the pick. It was his own. He slowly began to realize his position.

"Yes, it is mine," he acknowledged. "But Heaven bear me witness, I know nothing more."

"Why are all your traps packed?" demanded the leader.

Max answered with assurance—almost with confidence:

"My traps? I packed them—it is true—but it was to go down the river in the morning—I swear it."

"Then you deny the murder?"

"Murder? I? Oh Heaven, yes!"

This answer seemed only to madden them.

"Hang him!" they shrieked.

Max knew his life was in danger. Circumstances, indeed, condemned him. How should he prove his innocence?"

"Friends, hear me," he pleaded; "I will not ask for mercy—only the guilty should do that, and I am innocent of this deed. All I ask is a fair trial, and you will acquit me."

"But what of these proofs?" asked the leader.

"Ay, the proofs," echoed the miners.

"Alas, I know nothing of all this."

A burly fellow now roared, in a voice heard above the rest:

"Fellows, it's my opinion he knows more than he wants to tell, and I'm for forcing him to a confession!"

"Yes, force him! Tie him to the tree!" they yelled.

Resistance was insane. Max fell into their hands, and, with a silent prayer, prepared resignedly to meet his doom.

They were terribly in earnest. Not a man flinched from what he conceived to be his duty. In their opinion their prisoner was guilty of a most inhuman and horrible crime. He deserved death.

They proceeded to tie him to the tree.

Blackberry above was stricken with fear. They would discover him now, he had no doubt, and skin him alive.

"Sky-high! What's I goin' to do?" he thought. "Tell 'em, eh? They'll hang me, sure; for they're mighty riled. Dis blackberry got all de juice squeezed out o' him."

The leader had advanced in front of Max and again commanded him to speak.

"Now confess, Max Mixer!"

Max bravely answered:

"Friends, I have naught to confess—I am innocent!"

Build a fire under him; that will fetch him to them," commanded the leader.

"Ay, roast him to it," shouted the miners.

The exasperated mob did not hesitate to go to even this extremity.

Of course it must not be presumed it was their intention to burn Max alive. Their object was to extort a confession.

But Max could not tell what they might do in their maddened fury.

He expostulated.

"Good Heaven! you can not mean this?"

But they did.

Blackberry was desperate.

"They're goin' to roast Max," he muttered.

"Golly! dat'll be more'n a match for me. I'll drop on dat like blazes. Sky-high!"

The leader now spoke.

"Max Mixer, the committee give you one more opportunity before the match is applied. What say you?"

"What can I say? I am in the hands of my Maker. I protest against this outrage, and declare I am innocent."

"Fire the pile!" commanded the leader.

It was done.

A sheet of flame shot up into the darkness.

Blackberry could stand it no longer. Fire was not his element. With a series of yells he unmasked his presence.

"Look heah, folks! Dat man is innocent! I saw de whole massacre!"

All eyes were turned upward.

"You? Who are you?" they cried.

"Blackberry, de cook. De scamp who killed Dye hit him a foul blow and ran away. I swear to dat."

Before he had ceased speaking, a cry of alarm was borne from another part of the camp.

"Indians! Indians!"

In an instant the whole scene was changed.

"Out with your arms, men; the red devils are upon us!"

Down came the savages—a band of Sioux, on ponies—rushing like a tornado right upon the lonely and their unfortunate victim.

Blackberry now proved that he could fight, for jumping from the tree, he cut the rope that bound Max, seized a huge club and laid right and left among the foremost Sioux.

The conflict was brief but decisive, as usual in such encounters. In five minutes the Indians had lost a dozen braves; half of their remaining number were wounded; and with frightful whoops the survivors fled from the field.

Weekly Budget.

Number Seven in the Bible.—On the seventh day God ended his work.

On the seventh month Noah's ark touched the ground.

In seven days a dove was sent.

Abraham pleaded seven times for Sodom.

Jacob served seven years for Joseph.

David served seven years for Rachel.

And yet another seven years more.

Jacob was pursued a seven days' journey by Laban.

A plenty of seven years and a famine of seven years were foretold in Pharaoh's dream by seven fat and seven lean beasts, and seven ears of full and seven ears of blasted corn.

On the seventh day of the seventh month the children of Israel fasted seven days, and remained seven days in their tents.

Every seven days the land rested.

Every seventh year the law was read to the people.

In the destruction of Jericho, seven persons bore seven trumpets seven days; on the seventh day they surrounded (?) the walls seven times, and at the end of the seventh round the walls fell.

Solomon was seven years building the temple, and fasted seven days at its dedication.

TURNING THE GRINDSTONE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Of all things for which young mankind
Have reason to go mourning,
There's nothing which the youthful mind
Hates like this grindstone turning.

Your father picks on Saturday
When you've more time to do it,
And argues work's above all play,
And some day you'll see through it.

There's a butcher knife, a scythe, an ax,
That have come down from Adam,
So very full of knives and hucks
You wish the old Nick had 'em.

You grasp the handle, not with love,
And set the stone in motion—
He says you'll learn the principles of
Earth's daily revolution.

But as your turning's very slow,
He says, "Put more speed in it!
Come, make it once a minute."

How hard he bears upon that stone!
The labor thus increases.
You say such pressure has been known
To break a stone to pieces.

He takes your science into hands
His fallacy to show forth,
Descants on force, circumstance,
Pounds to the inch, and so forth.

You intimate that if he'd put
Oil on the ax, quite greasy,
Or plenty upon the stone, 'twould cut
Much better and run easier.

But he destroys your theories
With some suggestions vaster,
Insinuating elbow grease
Would make it go much faster.

You think an engine would be good
To turn that by the hour—
Not large, one in the neighborhood
Of thirty elephant power.

The nicks they come but slowly out;
How deeply do they measure!
They're pushed in deeper, you've no doubt,
By that tremendous pressure.

And so you turn and turn away,
And so you keep on turning;
The blisters on your fingers they
Are very large and burning.

The old gent keeps his eyes upon
The ax, and sees no better—
This done he takes the scythe, since one
Good turn deserves another.

And so you turn by circling rules
With face of crimson color:
Ah, turning grindstones sharpens tools,
But makes the boy much duller!

Buffalo-Hunters;

OR,
THE HAPS AND MISHAPS OF AMATEURS.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

V.—UNAPPRECIATED HOSPITALITY.

In no enviable state of mind Briggs and Vories watched the squaws as they dexterously stripped the dog of its skin, and then dismembered the carcass, flung the mass into a dirty, greasy kettle, probably stolen ages since from some white settler. One lean, dried-up-looking hag prepared the entrails for use by simply drawing them through her closed thumb and forefinger, then added the loathsome strings to the mess in the kettle. A few suspicious-looking roots and vegetables were also flung in, and then the kettle was supplied with water and hung over one of the fires by a wide crane.

While the squaws were thus engaged, the bucks for the most part had flung themselves upon the ground, and producing pipes and tobacco, added their contribution to the pungent smoke that eddied through the encampment, a fresh breeze having sprung up. Though dreading the worst, Charlie Briggs managed to mutter:

"Let's show 'em we're not afraid—we'll have one more good smoke before they rub us out."

Harry made no reply in words, but produced his favorite meerschaum, and tobacco-pouch, while Charlie drew his cigar-holder and case. The bucks, who had been watching the boys with cat-like eyes, now drew nearer, their eyes sparkling covetously as they scrutinized the neatly-carved pipe and holder. Though with trembling fingers, Harry managed to load and light his pipe, when a horny thumb and finger gently closed upon the carved bowl, and the long reed stem of a clay pipe was held to his lips, and a voice quietly drawled:

"Me swap smoke pipe!"

Slowly Harry suffered his jaws to relax, and as the amber mouthpiece was withdrawn, the strong-flavored reed was thrust into its place. This was the greatest blow yet, for while one can replace a revolver or watch, not so a pet pipe whose beautifully browning bowl one has watched with jealous care, for months or for years. Yet Harry did not care particularly about remonstrating, just then. He ever was a modest youth.

Charlie's experience was something similar. A dusky palm was stretched toward the little gold-mounted holder, a big buck Indian looking persuasively into his face. Feeling a peculiar choking in his throat, Briggs gently resigned the coveted article; at the same time the cigar-case glided from his hand, and he heard the words:

"Me like chaw tobacco—dam heap!"

These two sentences were the first ones the savages had uttered that the boys could understand, and despite the barefaced robbery that accompanied them, both Briggs and Vories felt a faint hope spring up in their hearts. Perhaps they could yet avert their anticipated doom by offering a fair ransom for their lives. And despite their fears, a sickly smile crept over their faces as they watched the antics of the savages over their new treasures.

The Indian who had borrowed Charlie's cigar-case, now stood in the center of an eager group. Thrusting the case into his breech-clout, he bit one of the four "weeds" in twain, storing one-half in his cheek. The other he thrust into the yawning mouth of the first Indian, who then withdrew. Marking with his thumb where the next one was to bite, he fed the cigars out fairly as long as they lasted. Each buck, as he received his "chaw," joined those gathered round the one with Harry's pipe, when a somewhat similar scene was in progression. Each buck, in his turn, took a long pull at the amber mouthpiece, and after holding his breath until half-suffocated, ejected the fragrant vapor through his nostrils. And so on until the bowl was empty.

Squatting apart from the rest, he who had confiscated Briggs' cigar-holder was slowly puzzling out its use. He crammed the open end full of tobacco, but when he stuck the holder into his mouth, the weed fell to the ground. But then a bright idea struck him. Carefully filling up once more, he placed a lighted coal on top, then laying flat upon his back, stuck the holder betwixt his teeth, and puffed away vigorously, to make up for lost time, until the curling tobacco lifted one side of the coal, causing it to drop into the half-closed eye of the smoker, who leaped to his feet with a yell of surprise, only to repeat the odd operation again.

In this way the time passed, until, lifting the pot from its support, one of the squaws uttered a loud yell: the savage substitute for tea-bell. The boys, believing their time had come at last, drew together as if for mutual protection, their faces turning a shade paler.

The meerschaum Indian—to distinguish him from the other—hastily wiped out the battered tin pan with a corner of his breech-clout, and filling it from the steaming pot, placed the mess before our friends, with a broad grin and expressive smack of his lips.

"Me tell you best eat—lie dam good!"

The boys, horror-stricken, interchanged blank looks. Could they eat of that mess, having been a witness of its concoction? Eat dog meat—flavored with its own entrails! Their flesh crawled, and for a moment it seemed as though their boots were journeying upward to scrape acquaintance with their tongues.

Noting their hesitation, Meerschaum plunged his fingers into the pan, withdrawing a dripping string, sucked it down, his face denoting what ecstatic pleasure the feat afforded him; then he added:

"See—you eat—lie dam good!"

Growing desperate, feeling that they could not stomach the loathsome mess, the boys were about to refuse, let the consequence be what it might, when a clear, significant click met their ears, and following the direction, they saw one of the Indians squinting along the revolver he had appropriated, seemingly at them. It takes a more than ordinary man to face a cocked and leveled revolver without shrinking, and assuming that a refusal upon their part would call the weapon into instant use, the boys plunged their trembling fingers into the pan, and shutting their eyes, managed to bolt a portion of the food. But nature revolted, and the boys were suddenly taken very ill. Let us draw the curtain.

Grunting his surprise, Meerschaum soon emptied the pan, and hastened back to help clean the pot, which was soon done. Then he—seemingly a kind of chief—spoke sharply to a couple of squaws, who immediately ran to a huge pile of plunder covered with robes, and in a few minutes they had fetched the frame of a lodge and covered it with skins. When done, this resembled a wagon-top, with buffalo-hide in place of the canvas tilt; and had the boys been learned in prairie lore, they would have known the savages belonged to the Osage tribe, since no other Indian uses a similar lodge.

Meerschaum now approached the boys, who had in a manner recovered from their qualms, and led them unresisting to the lodge. Though expecting nothing less than immediate death after their peculiar refusal of the dog-feast, the boys had not the spirit left them to resist. They were weak and trembling, and really it did not seem that death could be much worse than what they had already suffered.

With a laugh Meerschaum pushed the boys through the low entrance, then dropped and secured the skin door-flap. Stumbling, Briggs fell to the ground, over something that squirmed and kicked vigorously, proving, beyond all doubt, that it possessed life and plenty of it. A cry of horror broke from poor Charlie's lips. Startled, Harry sprung aside, but his heels caught in a robe, and he sat down with his full weight, but not upon the ground. An explosive grunt followed, and he felt himself flung forward, his head plunging into Briggs' waistband with a force by no means comfortable to either. Trembling, fearing they scarce knew what, the poor boys clung to each other, quivering in every nerve as they anticipated the stroke that should forever end their miseries.

But that stroke did not come, though they heard a gentle rustling, scratching sound. And then—could they believe their ears? Again—yes, it was! None but a woman—on a squaw—could emit that peculiar giggling. Two voices; the cold sweat started out from every pore. The boys knew now that they had been barbarously shut up in a small lodge with two female squaws!

"Edith—farewell! they mean to stab us in the dark!" quavered Briggs.

Harry only groaned.

The Roundwood Ghost.

BY RITT WINWOOD.

At last I had a habitation of my own, an imposing, red-brick structure, roomy enough to furnish homes for a full score of demure little mortals like myself.

"You will lose yourself in this great barn of a house, Madelon," said aunt Jerusha, who had accompanied me to Roundwood to be the ruling divinity of the ménage.

"It would not be much of a loss to the world in general if I should."

"Humph! I have no predilection for mistle-toe boughs and old oak chests. I want no such skeletons rising up to murder my rest."

"Trouble comes fast enough without borrowing it."

"At any rate, I've spoken my mind, and not without reason. It is doubtful if you have heard all that I have concerning your new possessions."

Aunt Jerusha looked so solemn that I quickly asked:

"What have you heard?"

"Roundwood has a ghost. You needn't laugh—it may prove to be no laughing matter. I got the story from the servants. Not a soul of them but is convinced the house is haunted."

"Tell me what they say."

"It is really quite dreadful, Madelon. They declare that Madame Belgrave can't rest quietly in her grave, but comes back to her old room, night after night, and walks the floor until morning."

"Has anybody seen her?"

"No; but all of them have heard her pacing up and down the apartment."

"Humph. The ghost must be laid. I don't like the idea of being disurbed at all hours of the night by such uncanny people."

"Nor I," dryly. "But who will do it?"

"I will," was my answer, as I caught a sun-bonnet from the wall and darted out into the garden to escape aunt Jerusha's solemn visage while I ruminated upon ways and means.

However, the prim, old-fashioned garden, with its quaint, angular walks and funny little beds, from which the flowers lifted bright and smiling faces as if in welcome, soon drove all thoughts of the ghost from my head.

I wandered up and down the box-bordered paths, peeping into grape arbors and summer-houses, inhaling the balsamic odors in the air, and hugging to myself the delicious sense of possession until I grew quite jubilant. Of all my pleasures, that of proprietorship was keenest just then. And why, indeed, shouldn't a nice brick house with available grounds be a "joy forever?"

I had reached the lower portion of the grounds, and was looking around upon my domain with quite the air of *une grande princesse*, when my gaze suddenly encountered a free-and-easy figure leaning over a wicket in the hedge-row. Starting at the vision, I rubbed my eyes, looked a second time, and exclaimed, involuntarily:

"Lawrence Belgrave!"

The figure lifted its hat, and smiled a cheerful "good-morning."

"I am no spirit, Miss Lane. Do, pray, try to look a trifle less startled and dismayed."

My emotion was quite pardonable—and for this reason: to this man I stood in the light of a usurper; I had cheated him out of his inheritance. He had been nearer related to Madame Belgrave—in fact, a sort of *protégé* of hers, whom she had brought up with the understanding that he was to inherit her coupon bonds and bank stock some day. But, twelve months prior to this time, there had been a violent quarrel between the old lady and Lawrence; he had left Roundwood in high dudgeon; and, to retaliate, Madame Belgrave had made a new will, leaving all her property to me.

The quarrel was never made up, and Madame died very suddenly in a fit, which forced her incapable of expressing any last wishes she might have had; so the will in my favor was the one produced at the funeral, and I found myself suddenly transformed from a country school-ma'am with one decent silk and two merinos, to a very rich woman, with the means to supply her wardrobe indefinitely.

So you will comprehend that if I felt somewhat dismayed on seeing that vision at the gate, I had abundant cause for it. However, I mustered up courage and went and shook hands with him quite cordially.

"You did give me quite a start, Mr. Belgrave, and I might as well plead guilty to it."

"I'm sorry." Then he stood looking at me curiously a moment. "I suppose I ought to congratulate you, Miss Lane, on your recent good fortune. Shall I?"

"If you can do so sincerely—not otherwise."

He laughed. "Then I'll keep my breath for other purposes."

"Shall you ever forgive me for having supplanted you?"

"I don't know. My 'great expectations' have turned out nearly as delusive as those of poor Pips. I ought to hate you, Miss Lane, but I don't—quite."

"Thanks for the margin that saves me from utter condemnation."

"I can't help thinking," he went on, reflectively, "that Madame Belgrave meant to restore me to favor finally, and that only opportunity was lacking. Proud and obstinate as she was, I'm sure she loved me."

"And so, on the strength of that opinion—which may or may not be correct—you expect me to abdicate in your favor?"

"I did not say so." Again his eyes swept my face curiously. "Is it in your heart to be so generous?"

I shook my head.

"Remember, I've tasted the cup of poverty—and it is bitter to my palate. It seems delightful to be rid of the toil and anxiety attendant on earning one's own living; I don't think I could take up the old burden again."

"I knew you would like *lotos-eating*."

"Who doesn't, for that matter? Besides, it has all the zest of a new sensation just now. I may tire of it—but that seems impossible."

"I propose of this inheritance of mine! I'll tell you what I am willing to do, Mr. Belgrave: I'll share it with you."

He opened wide his eyes, as if suspicious his ears had played him false.

"Are you serious?"

"I never was more so."

"Ah, conscience has begun to prick you already."

"Not a bit of it."

There was a slight pause, and then he said, with an amused smile:

"And you propose to make a happy and comfortable life of your expense?"

"You know I did not mean that," I returned, blushing, and yet speaking quite angrily. "This inheritance more than meets my luxurious notions—you have a sort of claim upon it—I am quite willing to make over the half to you. Indeed, an idea of that sort has been in my head all along."

"This is Quixotic."

"No," stoutly; "it is making two people happy and comfortable instead of one."

"But I refuse to be made a happy and comfortable master as well as a mistress?"

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Now I had always a great antipathy to these

vampire-like creatures; so catching up the poker from the fender, I aimed a deadly blow at the intruder.

The bat escaped unhurt through the open window, being too quick for me; but the poker descended with considerable force on the spot where he should have been. The same instant I heard a sharp, clicking noise, and the shield slid away, revealing to my astonished gaze a small chamber constructed in the massive chimney.

In this novel hiding-place lay a pile of papers. Trembling a good deal, I caught up the topmost one, and lastly examined it by the aid of the flickering candle. Instantly I knew that my first startled conjecture was a shrewd one, and that I now held in my hand Madame Belgrave's true and last will and testament, and that Lawrence Belgrave, not I, was the rightful owner of Roundwood!

It was scarcely a pleasant discovery to make. Thoroughly bewildered, I dropped into one of the quaint easy-chairs, trying hard to command my wandering senses sufficiently to realize it in all its bearings. My candle sputtered and went out, presently, but I still sat there quite oblivious to the fact, thinking only of my loneliness and the treadmill of poverty to which I must return.

At last I was aroused by a rustling sound, and a muffled step on the balcony without. With a sudden thrill of horror I beheld a dark figure rise before the window, and slide noiselessly over the sill. The next instant a dark lantern flashed its light over the room.

"I started to my feet with a shriek of uncontrollable terror. In an attempt to rush to the door, my limbs failed utterly, and I crouched pale and panting against the wall."

"Miss Lane! you here!" said a voice; and the man put down the lantern and came toward me. "I beg a thousand pardons for giving you such a start."

It was Lawrence. I rose up again, thoroughly ashamed of myself for having manifested such extreme terror.

"My emotion was quite excusable," said I, with all the old sadness, for I had grown bold as a lion again, now there was no real horror to confront. "I did not expect to see you at Roundwood to-night—hence my surprise."

"The fact is," he returned, manifesting considerable confusion, "I have come here every night for two weeks back, hunting for Madame Belgrave's will. Lawyer Green has told me she made one, about six months since. He thinks she destroyed it afterward, as it has not come to light. I hold to a different opinion. The will was in my favor, as you must readily guess, and I believe it is hidden in some safe place which Madame was prevented from disclosing by the awful suddenness of her death."

"Then you were the ghost?" I gasped.

"I suppose I must have been."

"Well, it is laid forever. You have no further need to haunt this apartment. Here is the missing document for which you have been searching; to-morrow I will abdicate as gracefully as possible, and Richard shall have his own again."

And while he stood staring at me, as if quite dumfounded, I pushed the will into his hand, and made a second effort to gain the door.

"This time it was Lawrence who detained me, forcibly."

"Don't go, Madelon," he whispered, his arm gathering me close to his side. "Now I can speak my mind freely. I'll not be master here unless you consent to be mistress, for I love you too dearly. What say you?"

I will never repeat my answer. But if aunt Jerusha had hurried to my rescue—as she had declared she would do—a few moments after I first shrieked for assistance, she would have beheld a tableau that might have sensibly shocked her ideas of propriety.

The Rival's Fate.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

A DEAD calm was on the sea. In the west the apparent boundary line of the ocean, drawn sharply across the sinking sun's lurid disk, seemed to cut it in twain.

In the red misty light lay the ship *Frolic*, not two leagues from the Navigator Islands, which she must pass on her way from Honolulu, her last port, to Japan.

Now her canvas hung motionless from the yards, the huge masts and foremast half-cleft up, the topsails and top-gallant sails flung against the masts, and the jib hauled down, lying across the boom.

Leaning over the rails, seated on the windlass, or reclining on the deck forward, the sun-browned, swarthy men of the watch seemed, by their listless attitudes, to feel the drowsy influence of the hour.

Even the captain's daughter, Mabel—a lively young brunette of seventeen, who, when on deck, was usually seen laughing and chatting with her father, in a voice whose rich melody would send a thrill through the hearts of the rough sailors, now bending far over the quarter bulwarks, apparently watched her pretty image reflected in the still water below.

Her attitude displayed her small feet incased in neat little boots with blue buttons, and afforded a slight glimpse of the pretty ankles in the closely-fitting white stockings. It also showed the little grace of the well-molded form, and the marble whiteness of the neck, contrasting with the black hair, done up in braids behind.

Mabel was in fact a lovely girl, with regular yet expressive features and dark eyes, the latter shaded by thick, dark, wavy hair, which she was amused, and becoming with angelic softness on other occasions.

Converse to her side, to lean over the rail and speak with her, in a low voice, came Lieut. Herbert Martin—a fine-looking young naval officer, who had taken passage from the Sandwich Islands aboard the merchantman for Japan, where lay his frigate, the *Cumberland*, from which he had been granted leave of absence before his vessel, some months before, left Honolulu.

On the other side of the deck, watching the two with secret rage, stood Simon Glayton, the mate of the *Frolic*; a tall, dark man, who had long vainly striven to win the affections of Mabel, and who hated his more fortunate rival, the lieutenant, who, as he had learned from the captain, was now the accepted lover of Mabel.

"What is that?" suddenly inquired the young girl, who, for some moments, had been gazing off the quarter-deck toward the setting sun.

"See it—a dark speck on the water," answered Herbert. "If the captain would lend me his glass—"

"Of course," interrupted Mabel, and running merrily to the companion-way, she brought him the spy-glass.

"A canoe turned bottom upward," said the lieutenant, after a moment's survey. "It is drifting this way, I think."

Night closed round the ship, and the lovers still stood conversing by the rail. At last Mabel went below, but Herbert remained on deck, walking to and fro with the light, elastic tread of health and happiness.

The moon had not yet risen, but the stars were out, and a dim light rested on the ocean, no longer calm, its surface being ruffled by a light breeze, which sent the ship slowly rippling along on her course. Just the upper edge of the moon's disk was lifted above the sea, when Herbert, unobserved by any person, except the mate, climbed over the rail into the main chains, where he stood, leaning far over, to see if, through the partial gloom, he might obtain a view of the overturned canoe, which he thought he had caught a glimpse of a moment before.

"It is still too dark," he muttered. "I don't see it, now, although I was quite sure I did, a moment since."

Unfortunately some slush (grease) had been spilled on the woodworks of the chains that day, while a sailor was repairing the shrouds. This caused the lieutenant's feet to suddenly slip from under him, when down he went into the sea.

As the ship forged on, the mate—the only man who had witnessed the accident—caught a glimpse of Herbert's upturned face, and heard him call for a rope.

Simon might easily have thrown him the end of the main brace, which was near him, had he wished to do so, but an evil spirit seemed to prevent him. He obeyed the dark promptings of hate and jealousy, and refrained from using any effort to save his rival.

The next moment, however, he regretted his cruelty, and felt an impulse to shout "man overboard!" but it was only for an instant; the spirit of evil resumed its sway, and the words died away in a murmur on the man's white lips.

With burning forehead and pallid face, he paced the deck, and soon remorse began to make itself felt.

"Good God! what have I done?" was his mental exclamation, as he leaned against the rail. "A murderer! a murderer—or, at least, as bad as one!"

Jealousy no longer worried him. He felt that, could he but see the lieutenant alive and well before him, he would not care how soon he married Isabel; for what was the torment of disappointed love he had previously felt to the anguish he now experienced?

Herbert was lost—probably lost forever, and Simon felt that it was his fault—that he might have saved him had he so wished.

It was a terrible thought, and the mate thought he would never muster courage to breathe it to a living soul—that he must forever keep the dark secret locked in his breast.

Walking forward to make sure that he was the only person who had seen the accident, he was soon reassured on this point. The look-outs had not yet been posted, and there was not a man on deck here, the whole watch having stolen into the forecastle to play cards. As to the man at the helm, aft, he was an old sailor, who, besides being near-sighted, was so deaf that it was necessary to yell an order into his ears for him to hear it.

The lieutenant was not missed until next day.

The vessel was searched fore and aft, but of course he could not be discovered; and it added to Simon's torture to behold the grief of the captain's daughter.

Pale as death she tottered into the cabin, and her wild sobs smote on the heart of the mate.

That Herbert had fallen overboard unobserved during the night, was the natural verdict of the crew.

Many mast-heads were manned, and keen eyes scanned the vast expanse of ocean, but nothing was visible except a sail far away, off the weather-quarter.

"Lost!" cried the captain; "we will never see him again!"

And as the fearful words struck on Mabel's ear, down in the cabin, she shrieked and fell senseless under her father's arms.

For weeks afterward she lay on her couch, in a burning fever; and though by the time the *Frolic* reached Japan, she had recovered from it, yet the crew could hardly realize that this pale, wasted girl was the once lively, blooming young Mabel.

As to the mate, a prey to but one feeling—remorse—he left the ship and wandered recklessly into the interior of Japan, not caring what became of him.

Hunger